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AN IMPARTIAL AND SUCCINCT  
**HISTORY**  
OF THE  
RISE, DECLENSION AND REVIVAL  
OF THE  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST;**  
FROM  
*THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR*  
TO THE  
PRESENT TIME.  
WITH  
FAITHFUL CHARACTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL  
PERSONAGES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

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**Second American Edition.**

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOL. II.

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**Baltimore :**  
PRINTED FOR ABNER NEAL, NO. 1, WATER STREET,  
BY JOHN WEST BUTLER, SOUTH GAY STREET.

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## CHAPTER I.

## ON THE EXTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

**T**HE zeal of the Popes for crusading had not abated, but the courage of his vassals for such expeditions was wonderfully cooled ; experience had taught them the difficulty of the enterprise, and the hypocrisy of those who were the instigators to it ; and therefore the Avignon and Roman pontiffs in vain employed exhortations, cajoleries, threatenings, entreaties, with the kings of France and England to feel for the honor of the holy sepulchre, and merit the plenitude of indulgences from the Church, A.D. 1307. But more important and pressing considerations fixed them on their thrones ; and some excuse or other constantly afforded, engaged them not to abandon their homes, for these Quixote pursuits of giants and Saracens.

Succeeding Popes even offered part of their own immense treasures to equip a fleet and army ; and opening the chest of the Church's store of indulgences, disposed of them on the most liberal terms, even to those who should contribute *only their money*, though they withheld their persons. What they really expended does not appear, but if we may believe the Emperor Lewis, of Bavaria, the Popes took care to lose nothing by their labours. The activity of their mendicant salesmen of indulgences, amply replenished their coffers ; and whether they spent any thing or not in preparations, the balance of the account stood pretty highly in their favour. All these abortive efforts discouraged not the twelfth Benedict from urging upon the French king this pious and important undertaking ; nor Philip from making vast preparations for visiting the Holy Land. But England threatened an invasion, which his absence might have rendered fatal to his kingdom, so he wisely deferred the crusade to a more favourable opportunity. AN. 1330.

AN. 1345. Still, though baffled, returning to the charge, the Pontiff, Clement V. unlocked the treasures of indulgences, that never-failing source of wealth and inducement ; whereby the profligate might be happily accommodated, and enter paradise under the cross, without doing penance for, or parting with any of their crimes. An army assembled under Guy, the Dauphin, and proceeded for the scene of conquest, but not being able to procure provisions, or to live without food, they

returned as they went, with their swords sheathed, and their indulgences in their pockets.

AN. 1363. One effort more closed these impotent attempts. John, king of France, instigated by the urgent exhortations, and won by the mighty promises of Urban V. prepared to measure lances with the Saracenic Knights under the walls of Jerusalem; but a greater conqueror, whom Christian and Infidel are equally unable to resist, arrested him in his mid career, laid him low in the dust, and all his vast preparations vanished, as the mist of the morning. Thus ended the vain struggle—Mahomedism remained triumphant, and the cross yielded to the crescent. Though it must be owned with regard to the reality of the Christian life, it was as little to be found among the crusaders as among the Saracens themselves.

Happier and more considerable success is said to have attended the missionary efforts of the pontiffs in Tartary and China. The papal see, eager to improve every opportunity of extending its dominions, had dispatched Dominican and Franciscan ambassadors to meet the host of Tartars, which, advancing from the East, had over-run Hungary, Poland and Silesia. This brought an embassy in return, and a new corps of black and white barefooted envoys proceeded to the court of Kublai, the Tartar monarch. AN. 1307. JOHANNES A MONTE CORVINO, one of the most zealous of these missionaries, is said to have laboured with success, in bringing back many Nestorian Christians to the

Roman pale, and spreading the gospel among the Tartars ; for whose use he translated the New Testament into the Tartar language, a work indeed becoming a faithful missionary, and which could not fail to produce some happy effects. The reports which reached Europe were now so flattering, that the head missionary Corvino was raised to the archbishopric of Cambalu or Peking, the capital, and seven new Franciscan bishops dispatched to obey his orders, and second his efforts in the conversion of Tartars and Chinese. An intercourse being thus established with Rome, and permission given by the government of China, for the missionaries to labour in their vocation, the number of Latin churches is said to have been considerably increased. I confess I have but a very low opinion of the Christianity then taught, if I may judge by other missionary specimens : and I hear with a great many grains of allowance, the reports of the missionaries themselves, who, for the honor of holy church and their own, were not at all backward in enhancing the greatness of their labours, and vaunting the abundance of their success. But whatever it was, the endurance of it was short, and scarce a trace in all these vast regions hath ever since appeared of the Christian religion planted by them.

The arms of the Teutonic Knights in the North had nearly extirpated, by fire and sword, the last remains of paganism in Prussia and Livonia. One pagan monarch there still was, strong in the affections and valour of his people, Jagellon, Duke of

Lithuania. AN. 1386. But the vacant throne of Poland, and the beautiful Hedwige, the daughter of the preceding sovereign, had charms irresistible. As neither the one or the other could be obtained without his submitting to baptism, and receiving the sign of the cross, he thought himself well paid for his complaisance, and bending the necks of his pagan subjects to the religion he had himself embraced, he united his duchy with the crown of Poland, and received the fair princess for his bride. Thus all the northern people at last submitted to the profession of Christianity, and though in general they remained as much heathens as before, bishoprics were erected, and they learned to make the sign of the cross.

I am ashamed to mention the numerous conversions of that ill-fated people, the Jews ; whose wealth tempted the avarice of the monarchs, and whose persons and religion were so odious to the Roman Pontiffs, and in general to the Christian world. They had spread wonderfully through every part of Europe, engrossed a great share of its traffic, and by their craft, their dexterity, and their usury, contrived to accumulate riches, that could not but excite the envy and appetite of their enemies. These began with blackening their character with every atrocity—children crucified and eat by them—the fountains poisoned—the consecrated wafers pierced, bleeding, and abused by their impious hands—charges as ridiculous as horrid, and impossible to be true ; besides, it was their interest and object to live in peace among the

Christians, however abhorrent they might be of their superstitions. But where enmity was rooted, and credulity the easy dupe of the designing, it became no difficult matter to persuade Christian magistrates and prelates to persecute a detested race of people ; and to exalt their zeal in conversions, whilst they gratified their covetousness by the plunder of these devoted victims ; a terrible persecution, therefore, generally arose against them. Death in every shape of horror seized the obstinate, and those who saved their lives by baptism, neither saved their property, nor changed one of their sentiments. We may be always sure, “ **A RELIGION THAT PERSECUTES NEVER CAME FROM HEAVEN.**” It must be said of every one who injures his fellow, “ ye are of your father, the Devil, and the works of your father ye do.” Yet even these horrid executions produced the high commendations of the church of Rome, and merited indulgencies equal to the zeal of crusaders.

The Saracenic kingdoms of Spain had not yet utterly submitted to the Christian yoke, but Valentia, Gránada, and Murcia, with Andalusia, only remained, and they trembled before the increasing superiority of the kings of Castile and Arragon. Their brethren of Fez and Morocco, failed not, in this extremity, to hasten to their assistance, and often the scales of success vibrated, and it became dubious, whether the Christian or Mahomedan faith should prevail : but the courage of the Spanish Christians aided by their brethren, whom the Roman pontiff roused to their assistance, by the



same promises of heaven, and indulgences, which were bestowed on those who conflicted in the Holy Land, turned the balance against the infidels : and more and more straitened every day, their fall and final expulsion approached with hasty strides. Yet these miserable wars wasted the finest country in Christendom, and thinned the ranks of population, to which other causes still supervening, many of the most beautiful and fruitful territories lie uncultivated, and almost without an inhabitant. War is always a fearful scourge, every thing which deserves the name of Christian, abhors it.

But whatever Christianity gained in these partial conquests in the West, in the East it lost in a more abundant proportion. The Tartars became Mahometans under the mighty Tamerlane, deluged the *Eastern world* with blood and devastation.

Before him fell the Ottoman Emperor Bajazet ; and the Greek trembled on his throne, as the ravages of the Tartar horse approached the Bosphorus. But to the whole Christian name this terrible conqueror was peculiarly fatal : not satisfied with subjugation and tribute, he resolved to compel his subjects to embrace the religion of their master. Death in its most tremendous forms rose up at the command of the bigot monarch, to terrify into apostacy the staggering and the feeble, or to exterminate the obstinate ; whilst the mildest fate allotted to any Christian was slavery and exile. Thus few, very few remained, whether Greeks or Nestorians, through the vast extent of this newly erected empire, and all fell prostrate before

the sword of Tamerlane, and the delusions of the impostor.

Nor did the promising appearances in China and the North of Asia, long subsist. Before the end of the century a change of government in that vast country, completely excluded the possibility of a missionary's entrance ; and by a fundamental law of the new dynasty, no stranger might pass the frontier line on penalty of death. Thus terminated the efforts which had been made, in disappointment, and the final abolition of the Christian profession. At least no records authentic remain of any subsisting churches, till the sixteenth century, though report suggests, that a small remnant of Nestorians was still concealed in the remoter provinces.

## CHAPTER II.

## STATE OF THE INTERNAL CHURCH.

**T**HE numerous schools and universities established, promised an abundant harvest of literature. But the effects were not answerable to these expectations, as the preposterous methods of tuition, and the scholastic theology, diverted the minds of the students from the primary objects of science, and the right means of attaining them, to subtilties, puerilities, and discussions, on subjects at once so intricate and useless, that the time and labour employed upon them, produced only a kind of more pompous ignorance.

Aristotle still maintained his empire in all the universities, and his word was held true as the Gospel. A few, of a mystical turn, preferred the visions of Plato. The Aristotelians also were divided, and the sects of *Nominalists* and *Realists*, at no time battled it with greater fury than in the present age. The former, led on by the mighty warriors Occam, Buridan and others ; and strongly resisted by the *realist* doctors of the Sorbonne, supported by the papal see, offended highly with the *spiritual* Franciscans, to whom Occam belonged, for their obstinate opposition to the edicts, respecting the ridiculous disputes which divided them. Condemned, prohibited by the University

of Paris, and a pontifical sanction added to the decree, the *Nominalists* still refused to yield, and the persecution but enraged their zeal and increased their numbers, as is usually the case. AN. 1339.

The nobler sciences of geometry, astronomy, and the mathematics, though pursued with eagerness, were obscured by the passion for astrology, with which men of all ranks, learned and unlearned, high and low, were infected. To read the destinies of men in the stars, was the great book now studied ; and notwithstanding the frequent accusations of magic and witchcraft, which brought the adventurous under the bloody tribunal of the inquisition, and kindled the flames which consumed the physician Asculanus, others were not deterred by his fate from pursuing these absurd researches into futurity, AN. 1337. The famous Raymond Lully escaped, whose works are yet extant, and have continued to seduce many in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, the universal elixir, and other wondrous inventions, which have exercised the folly and patience of the hermetical philosopher.

Yet genuises of a superior order arose in the university of letters ; and Petrarch and Dante, in poetry and eloquence, might vie with the first of the Augustan age. Indeed, the progress of polite literature and philosophy, far exceeded the theological class, the productions of which scarce deserve to be mentioned ; and their manner of treating divine subjects was as abstruse and forbidding, as

their matter was adulterated and unevangelical. All who read the Bible, and relished the simplicity of truth, were branded as heretics, and delivered over to their tormentors.

The Church of Rome was at its summit of arrogance and abuses; and they formed a regular descent to the lowest of the sacerdotal tribe. The begging regiments of monks and friars fought manfully under its banners; the kings of the earth seemed to have given their power unto the beast; and the inquisitors, implacable as inhuman, watched over heretical pravity with the eyes of Argus, to keep down every spirit which breathed reform, or that supposed the Church could possibly need it, either in its head or its members. Yet, under all these flattering appearances of triumphant dominion, secret causes were working to weaken, and finally dissolve the papal tyranny; to which three things especially contributed.

AN. 1305. 1st. The removal of the papal see to Avignon in France, and the schisms which prevailed in it. This loosened the bonds of spiritual obedience, whilst two, and sometimes three popes together, each claiming infallibility, and to be the sole head of the Church, distracted the fearful to decide to whom obedience was due, on pain of damnation, thundered out against their reciprocal partisans. This led many to think whether such claims were to be found in the Scriptures, or such obedience due to either of them. Nay, whether a visible head was at all essential to a Christian Church. The growing wants also of the popes,

and their increasing rapaciousness, invented new modes of oppressing the Christian world, and added fresh cause of disgust and complaint. Some of their dominions being distant, and unproductive, through the tumults occasioned by their absence ; and still less productive when the gains and plunder were to be divided between competitors, according to the several nations that were under their obedience ; this led to the increase of all preceding abuses. The popes claimed the *first fruits* of all ecclesiastical benefices, according to one year's rated value. *Reservations, provisions and expectatives*, put all ecclesiastical preferments into their disposal, a right they derived from *the plenitude of power* with which they pretended Christ had invested them—and of this they made the most scandalous traffic, by their different legates throughout the Christian pale. But the never failing source of indulgences was still pushed to a higher produce, by John XXII, A.D. 1316, who is said to have left in his treasury five-and-twenty millions of florins, of which eighteen millions were in specie, and the rest in plate and jewels, the plunder extorted from the nations under his obedience. Such exactions, and such claims, however they might be carried down for a time, could not but revolt many who dared to examine the grounds of them, and leave in every nation a bitterness of disgust, at feeling themselves thus mercilessly drained to supply the pride, the vices, and the tyranny of French or Roman pontiffs.

2. A second cause for weakening the secret springs of the Roman government, was, the resistance made to the arrogant claims of Boniface, so

openly avowed, and in a letter to Philip, king of France, so strongly enjoined ; and afterwards by a bull solemnly promulgated—"That all power, "*spiritual and temporal*, was vested by Jesus Christ "in the Roman see." That every being of the human race, who dared disbelieve this fact, or with-hold his obedience, was thereby constituted *an heretic, and damned to all eternity.* AN. 1303.

Philip was not a man to submit to these arrogant pretensions, and therefore wisely set himself to reduce within bounds these extravagant claims, which, in his answer to the Pope, he treated with becoming contempt : and, in an assembly of his peers, not only rejected all such insolent demands, but engaged them to concur with him in an accusation of heresy and simony against the Pope himself, drawn up by an intrepid lawyer, Nogaret, and demanding an œcumenical council to judge and depose him. The furious Boniface immediately launched all the thunders of the Vatican at his head. But as they needed only to be despised to be harmless, Philip, supported by his states, prepared to carry his purposes into effect, and sent Nogaret with orders to seize the refractory pontiff, and bring him bound to Lyons to be judged. As Philip had a strong party at Rome, his envoy seized the Pope at Anagni, where he expected no such visitant, and treating him with every indignity, so wounded the head which bore the tiara, with his gauntlet, that though the pontiff was rescued by the people, and carried to Rome, he died of the wounds he had received, or the fever brought on by rage and vexation. AN. 1303.

His successor, overawed, recalled the excommunication. But Philip continued with a high hand to demand the condemnation of Boniface, and the suppression of the **KNIGHTS TEMPLARS**, accused of heinous crimes, though their only real ones appear to have been their wealth, which Philip wanted, and their daring to espouse the cause of Boniface, whom he had resolved to punish. To effect this, on the next election, he secured the papal chair for a creature of his own, Clement V. whom he engaged to reside at Avignon, to be more under his immediate influence. To his pride and covetousness the Templars were sacrificed; and thus Clement V. compromised the saving the honor of the holy see, in order that Boniface might escape condemnation, on which, though dead, Philip strongly insisted.

It was of bad example to show, that the popes might be resisted with impunity. When therefore John XXII. presumed to interfere in imperial quarrels, to arrogate to himself to decide between rival candidates, and to dispose of the empire as if it had been a Roman fief, Lewis of Bavaria followed the steps of Philip, and despising the papal edict which deposed him from his throne, **AN. 1324**, and the excommunication which followed, doom-ing him to eternal perdition, he, by his own authority, deposed John, as unworthy of the see, and placed in it Nicholas V. from whom he received at Rome the imperial crown. **AN. 1328** After some time Nicholas submitted himself to John at Avignon. But the contest between the Pope and Em-

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peror, to destroy each other, lasted till the death of the competitors, and each sat firm in his throne.

Lewis not only resisted himself, but taught others to resist. All who were persecuted by the Roman see and its inquisitors, fled to him for protection, and ranged themselves under his banners. Among these were the excellent Marsilius of Padua, who defended the Emperor with his pen; and many of the Beghards, Fratricelli, and others, called heretics, who, safe under imperial patronage, were taught by experience, that papal anathemas, which could not be enforced, were not to be feared.

3. The disputes among the Franciscans, in which the Popes so often and fruitlessly interfered, served greatly to rouse a spirit of resistance to their authority.

A great contest was maintained through all this century, between the rigid and relaxed Franciscans, about the rules of their order. The rigid, called *spiritual*, would submit to no compromise, but would be *beggars absolute*, and destitute of all claim to any *right of use*, even to the rags they wore. The *mitigated rule*, admitted of the *use* without the *property*; and, that what they got by begging, might be laid up in storehouses for a day of want. This was an inexpressible breach of the order in the eyes of *the spiritual*; and this ridiculous contest occasioned more trouble, vexation, disputes, and enmities, than all the essential doctrines of Christianity put together. Sometimes the Popes favoured one of the parties; but wisely,

in general, endeavoured to compromise the differences. The rigid could bear no abatement of the most austere rules of St. Francis, and determined they would be *beggars* in spite of all papal decisions. For this, at intervals, they were miserably persecuted, and four of the most zealous suffered in flames at Marseilles, whilst Delitiosi, their head, died in prison. These martyrs to their cause were adored by their brethren, and no decisions of Popes or inquisitors could prevent the veneration in which they were held. AN. 1318.

“ That neither Christ or his apostles possessed  
“ any thing in common, or personally, by right of  
“ property ;” was asserted by one of the *spirituals*.  
This the Dominicans denied. The flame burst out  
with fresh violence. The popes sought to appease  
it. The very vitals of gospel truth were in danger.  
Silence was in vain enjoined upon the angry disputants : they would fight, in spite of their father.  
Thus Dominicans against Franciscans, and Franciscans against Dominicans ; and to make confusion more confused, Franciscans against Franciscans, waged irreconcilable war ; which the holy pontiffs, siding sometimes with the one, and sometimes with the other, could neither terminate nor allay.

The inquisition worked hard to destroy this refractory spirit ; and after fountains of blood opened, these Franciscan beghards continued, though suppressed, uneradicated. To close these wounds, at last the Popes consented to a division of the order, into those who persisted in the *severer*

rule of discipline; and those who admitted a *mitigation* of it. The one bore the name of *Conventual Brethren*, the other, the *Brethren of Observation*. Yet, even to this, many refused to acquiesce ; and professed to prefer St. Francis before popes and councils, his rule to the Gospel, and his person, if not to a superiority, yet to an equality with Jesus Christ.

The fictions invented concerning St. Francis, and sanctioned even by the popes, are horrible. The Franciscans, to exalt their leader, determined to assimilate him to the Son of God ; and asserted he bore the five wounds of Christ, impressed upon him by the divine Master himself, that he might be admitted into the most complete resemblance of himself. And if we believe credible history, it is a fact, that such stigmas were found upon his body ; wounds inflicted, no doubt, by fanaticism, or craft, to render him a higher object of veneration to his disciples. The Dominicans ridicule these pretensions ; the Franciscans hold them firmer than the articles of faith : and books of blasphemy upon blasphemy have been produced by these zealous followers, to manifest the conformities of St. Francis with Jesus Christ. Albizi produced forty particulars, but a Spanish monk produced four thousand, tending to demonstrate the perfect equality of St. Francis, with the Saviour of mankind.

That the state of the world in every thing worthy the name of Christian must be, when these

contests could so solemnly engross the nominal Church, may be easily conceived. Indeed, the corruption, by every account, was equal to the folly ; and the insolence of the Romish tyranny could only be exceeded by the despicable meanness with which it was generally borne.

## CHAPTER III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, HERESIES,  
DISPUTES, RITES, AND CEREMONIES.

THE papacy, wherever seated, or however torn with intestine divisions, maintained its proud claims of dominion over all persons, ecclesiastical or civil, assuming all powers in Heaven and upon earth. But as this was disputed, a continual warfare was maintained by the princes, who asserted their independence, and by all who presumed to find fault with the tyranny of Rome. Her defenders, however, were strong and numerous. The *canonists*, who lived by the courts spiritual, were their learned advocates ; the *monks* and *clergy* all decided satellites ; the *inquisitors* their bloody executioners ; whilst the reverence acquired by long prescription, and supported by the suggestion of its being due to Christ's immediate vicar upon earth, cast a glory around the pontiffs not easily tarnished. The preceding chapter will shew the height of their exaltation, and the causes that prepared the way for their abasement. Their very defenders were among the authors of their fall ; for the scandalous lives of the monks and clergy were too visible not to be noticed ; and even the mendicant tribes of Dominicans and Franciscans, with all their poverty and obedience, were greatly belied, if the monkish cowl did not conceal the most

scandalous immoralities and vices ; which some of the most disciplinarian Popes endeavoured to remedy in vain. The *orders* had advanced themselves so high in the courts of princes and in their favour, were so dispersed through the world, and so united in the defence of their privileges, that the Popes were compelled to respect the beggars they had made ; and superstition had attached such sanctity to their habit, that multitudes in their dying hours purchased admission into their order, or remembered them liberally in their wills, that they might at least be buried in the mendicant's rags, and so bear some relation to the fraternity, in hopes at the day of judgment to stand a better chance in these beggars' weeds. Yet the universal spread of these orders, the protection of the pontiffs, their advancement to the highest distinctions, their assumption of the first places in the university chairs, and above all, the diminution of power and wealth occasioned by their privileges, to the prelates and secular clergy, made them hated, though feared : and stirred up many to dispute their rights, and to be jealous of their influence. The universities of Oxford and Paris resisted their claims ; and though the monks were vigorously supported by their pontifical masters, many set themselves to write against their abuses, and some even to deny the papal authority to grant such privileges. John de Polliac in France, Richard Archbishop of Armagh, and others, resisted ; but in vain. The monks triumphed at the court of Rome, over all their adversaries. AN. 1320—1356.

AN. 1360. The famous Wickliff particularly distinguished himself in this controversy ; and seconded the Archbishop in his opposition to the encroachments of these insolent beggars, on the privileges and statutes of his university at Oxford : and through the sides of their companions, the popes, and the Roman see itself, received many hard blows from this intrepid Englishman ; for which the Archbishop of Canterbury, Langham, a creature of the papacy, deprived him of the wardenship of Canterbury Hall, now Christ's Church, and put a monk in his place : which decision the Pope on appeal, confirmed. For they who appeal from ecclesiastic to ecclesiastic can hope for little justice. Naturally incensed at this oppression, as well as zealous for the honour of his university, Wickliff spared not the tyranny of Rome, or the abuses of that government ; whilst he treated all the monkish order with equal severity and contempt. He exhorted all men to read the Scriptures for themselves, and resolved to procure them that opportunity, by translating the Bible into his native tongue, and dispersing copies as widely as possible. A crime of this enormity could not escape episcopal cognizance ; and on the accusation of these monks, *Sudbury*, Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned the heretic before a council at London, AN. 1377 ; where nothing could have prevented his condemnation but the favour of John à Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and other noblemen, who honoured the reformer, and protected him from violence. The great schism of the popedom just then happening, the accusation slept, and Wickliff

held his rectory of Lutterworth, and disseminated far and wide with the Scriptures, the principles of truth and of the reformation. A succeeding Archbishop, *Courteney*, at the instigation of the monks, revived the process, AN. 1385; and though Wickliff's person yet escaped the flames, his books and opinions did not; being judged in two councils held at London and Oxford, heretical and erroneous. How he avoided the effects of their malice, is uncertain; whether by humiliations, or through the same powerful protection which he had before experienced. He retired, however, to his benefice in the country, and shortly after finished his glorious career, AN. 1387; leaving behind him the seeds which were to bring forth fruits of eternal life to millions yet unborn. His followers were not as happy as their leader, many of them under the denomination of *Lollards* and *Wickliffites*, were hunted out by the bishops and their inquisitors, and proceeded against with all the unrelenting cruelty of their courts ecclesiastical. The vengeance which Wickliff's living person escaped, fell upon his dead bones, which, in consequence of a decree of the council of Constance, were afterwards dug up and publicly burnt.

The *Lollards*, who now became marked as an heretical sect, and afforded a general name for odium and persecution, were originally from Flanders. The clergy and monks not chusing to attend the sick and dying in pestilential disorders, or to procure burial for their corpses, a set of brethren and sisters, who chose St. Alexius for



their patron, associated for these humane offices ; and received the name of *Cellites*, from the cells to which they retired ; and of *Lollards*, from the dirges sung at these funerals. Their psalmody attracted many, and associations of a like kind were formed in Hainault, Brabant, and many parts of Germany, where these persons were in nothing more distinguished than by *their singing*: Their name being derived from the High Dutch word, *lullen*, singing in a plaintive tone of voice, as the *beghards* had received theirs from the word *beggen*, or praying earnestly. And these names and sects began to be confounded together, as probably the same persons were as observable from the hymns they sung, as the earnestness of the prayers which they offered. As the term *Beghard*, so the name *Lollard* was imputed indiscriminately to all who fell under heretical suspicion, whether, like Wickliff, they were men of true zeal and Christian piety, or belonged to the multitude of reformers of every kind, who sprung up, bearing testimony against papal abuses ; though as their enemies affirmed, cloaking the greatest crimes, and most heretical opinions under the profession of sanctity. Their profession, indeed was evident ; but the crimes in general charged upon them, probably their glory. Many of these, especially when they lost their great support in Lewis of Bavaria, the Emperor, who had protected them from papal persecution, fell into the hands of the inquisitors ; and others, to save themselves from prison and death, dispersed and fled, wherever they could be hid, or find protection. Bohemia received many of the fugitives, where they joined

the discontented with the papal usurpations, formed the party after called Hussites, and became the first fruits or revivers of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren.

The subtilties of Aristotle, and the schools, also increased the number of heretics, and made work for the inquisitors, whilst the deep philosophical disputants were ready to start questions and broach opinions impious and heretical, for which' some were burnt, and others prudently retracted.

AN. 1387. The Dominicans particularly brought upon themselves the indignation of the University of Paris, for disputing *the immaculate conception of the Virgin*: and Montesonus, their champion, was excommunicated by the Pope, to the great triumph of the Franciscans. The famous Duns Scotus, the Franciscan, assailed the Dominican Doctor, Aquinas, and the body of each order ranged themselves on the side of their equally subtile and absurd gladiatorial leaders. *The immaculate conception of Mary* prevailed.

A more important controversy was maintained by the same doughty champions, *Scotists* againts *Thomists*, on the long disputed articles of the *freedom of the human will*, the *nature and measure of divine grace*, the *eternal purposes of God*, and the means of accomplishing them ; with other curious questions on *bodily identity*: both claimed the Church and her authority, and had it. But as contradictions cannot be true, and both sides were admitted to be good Catholics, and sound in the

faith, this was compelled to be a drawn battle, and each continued to hold their own opinions.

The unhappy schism between the Greek and Latin churches could not be healed. For, however, in the hour of distress, the Grecian emperors and patriarchs were disposed to secure the Roman assistance by concessions, the clergy and people revolted at the idea ; and in the end, the dispute was as bitter as at the beginning.

I cannot dwell on the new sect of mystics, the *illuminés* of that day, who could see the divine glory by long fixing their eyes on their navels ; nor whether this was “ a portion of the eternal light in which God dwells,” and whether “ this light is distinct from the divine essence,” and “ the same that appeared on Mount Tabor ;” and whether there be a difference between “ the essence of God and his attributes.” The prelate, Palamas, and the monk, Barlaam, shall be at liberty respecting these things, to anathematise each other.

AN. 1348. A more awful scene presents itself in the execution of the various denominations of heretics, by the inquisitors of Christ's vicar upon earth. They were hunted out in every part of Christendom, and under the names of Beghards, Lollards, Wickliffites, Waldenses, Cathari, Apostolics, and Brethren of the Free Spirit, compelled to abjure or perish ; confuted by the keen disputant, Duns Scotus, but more powerfully pressed by the arguments of tortures, racks, gibbets, fire, and chains. Being comprised under the general

name of heretics, it will be difficult to separate innocence from guilt, error from falsehood, and the fanatic and immoral, from the follower of the Scriptures, and the Godly in Christ Jesus ; as in truth these were equally criminal in the eyes of their persecutors, wherever they stood connected with that greatest of all crimes, rejection of the tyranny, and complaint of the abuses of the Church of Rome.

*The Whippers* also renewed their flagellations, to which they annexed the most meritorious virtues, as equal to baptism, and superseding the necessity of the blood of Christ ; and their processions occasioned no small disturbances. The anathemas of Clement, and the fires of inquisitors, strove to extirpate these wandering fanatics in vain.

AN. 1373. A more joyous sect in Liege and Flanders, exercised the judges of heretical pravity. These were *the Jumpers*, who assembled of both sexes, and holding hand in hand, displayed the most extraordinary gestures ; till exhausted with the violence of their continued motions, they fell breathless to the ground, pretending at these seasons to receive visions and revelations. The ignorant clergy regarded them as demoniacs, and by incense and exorcisms, endeavoured to cast out the dancing devils from the deluded fraternity. The French Convulsionists, and the Welch Jumpers, have had predecessors of the same stamp. There is nothing new under the sun. Yet knavery and folly are more tolerable than cruelty. At the one we can smile, at the other we shudder.

AN. 1350. Clement VI. not willing to wait a hundred years, and having discovered that the jubilee among the Jews was observed every half century, seized the plausible pretext to gratify the devotion of pilgrims, and profit by their credulity. His successors improved upon the hint, and shortened yet the term to five-and-twenty years. There wanted no pretext; the advantage of the case superseded all other reasons.

To make plenty of holidays, Innocent V. added to their number, the festival of *the lance*, of *the nails*, and of *the crown of thorns*, with their appropriate forms and ceremonies; and, horrible to relate, the festival of *the five wounds*, made so sacred by the stigmas impressed on St. Francis, to please the Franciscans, was added to the calendar. Whilst the heretic John XXII, enjoined Gabriel's salutation of Mary, to be added to every Christian's daily prayers. Nothing was too gross or absurd for the folly, ignorance, and superstition of the age.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

**I**T is reviving, amidst the dark and dreary scenes through which we must toil, to see a beam of light darting across the dismal gloom, and promising a rising sun to dispel the clouds of ignorance and error.

Wickliff stands among the foremost, whose labours tended to enlighten the sphere in which he moved, and to unbar the gates of truth, which had been shut by the seclusion of the oracles of God from the sight of the people.

The spreading sects of Lollards, and their fellows, into whatever mistakes the spirit of the times might lead them, all united in examining the iniquitous claims of Rome ; in discovering the delusions of the superstitions by which they had been enslaved ; the priest-craft by which they had been plundered ; and the unchristian cruelty of their ecclesiastical persecutors. To such superiors they might well refuse obedience, and plead for that hated word, REFORM. All attempts to quench the rising flame, though succeeding in one spot, only drove the persecuted to another, where it broke out afresh, and continued to spread in spite of all attempts to extinguish it. The Waldenses

and Albigenses, increased in the South of France and Switzerland. The Beghards and Lollards wandered through Flanders and Germany. Bohemia received the persecuted refugees, and adopted them and their sentiments. The faithful were, indeed, comparatively few, and found generally in the lowest ranks of life, especially among the weavers of Antwerp and the Netherlands. Some, who bore the names of heretical infamy, probably deserved reproach : but there was a chosen generation, a remnant, according to the election of grace, whom all the waters of error could not quench, nor the floods of persecution drown.

The University of Oxford had the honor of producing the first eminent English reformer, and the crime of persecuting and expelling him. The Dominicans and Franciscans, who then bore rule, could neither endure the light of the Scripture truth, nor the purity of Scripture conduct ; but *exulso uno non deficit alter* ; others arose to maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, and to spread the translations of the oracles of God.

What real religion remained in the East, among the Greeks or Nestorians, it is difficult to ascertain. Yet I cannot but hope, from past experience, that the persecutions which thinned their ranks, would purify their spirits ; and, that those who dared to suffer the loss of all things, and death itself, for Jesus Christ and his name, were living members of his body mystical. In the West, the numbers greatly increased of those who emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage ; and

whatever abuses might attend the liberty they claimed, a people arose to be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, resolute to suffer any torments rather than submit to idolatry and superstition ; and zealous to spread through the Christian world the necessity of consulting the oracles of God ; renouncing all dominion of men over their faith, that they might become followers of God as dear children. It is pleasingly observable, how all true spiritual religion appears in every age under the same form. The names with which these non-conformists to an evil world are branded, may be different ; but a name of reproach and odium they ever have had, and ever will have, whilst men hate the light, nor come unto the light. The things which affixed these stigmas upon them, were *singing hymns and psalms, praying with great devotion, and a love and diligent reading of the word of God*. May every age produce an increasing multitude of such Beghards, Lollards and Wickliffites !

Yet these were in general so few comparatively and so inferior, in all that the world calls good and great, that they gave no very alarming apprehensions to their lordly masters. Power, wealth, wisdom, and multitudes were leagued against them ; and it is matter of astonishment, how the burning bush continued unconsumed amidst the flames.



## CENTURY XV.

## CHAPTER I.

## EXTERNAL STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

**T**HE last poor remains of the Grecian empire were now ready to fall under the Mahomedan yoke: wasted with incessant war, and harrassed by these conquerors, the Christians through Asia were compelled to bow their necks to their dominion, and many to adopt their religion. Reduced to *little more than the city of Constantinople*, in vain they invoked the help of the Western world. The Pope, more anxious to reduce them to spiritual subjection than to enable them to maintain their liberties, deceived them with promises of assistance in order to engage their submission, which he was either unwilling or unable to afford them. The dreadful hour arrived, and Constantinople fell; the terror of it alarmed the Western world, yet could not unite the Christian princes in any common bond to oppose a torrent that threatened quickly to deluge the West, as it had done the East. AN. 1453.

The regions of Tartary, and the adjacent provinces, with the vast empire of China, returned again to Cimmerian darkness. The light which

had been once kindled, appeared nearly, if not utterly extinct; and if any remained professing the Christian name, they were obliged to use the greatest precautions to conceal themselves from observation.

Nor did the conquest over the Saracens in Spain, or the envenomed persecution of the Jews, increase much the number of Christians. The Mahomedans obstinately adhered to their false prophet, and no temptation nor terror could induce them to submit to the papal missionaries. Indeed their teaching and cruelties were alike unsuited to produce conviction on minds ulcerated with ill-usage; and the final expulsion of them from their country, by the famous archbishop of Toledo, was a step as impolitic as savage. The Jews also resisted and suffered: compelled to abjure Moses, many dissembled and submitted, but retained judaism as tenaciously as ever, with the most implacable abhorrence of their persecutors. To this day they remain in Spain and Portugal, bowing the knee to the cross through terror of the inquisition, and secretly cursing him who bore it.

The discovery of a new world opened a noble entrance for gospel truth, had the missionaries been as evangelical as the mariners were adventurous: but Christianity shudders at the recital of Spanish cruelties, and Portuguese conquests. The thirst for gold seems to have extinguished every sensibility of the human heart. To compel the tortured to discover their wealth, and to submit to baptism for the salvation of their souls, displays

an atrocity of character that must for ever be execrated : we turn from the scenes recorded, with shame and indignation : such Christianity could only be the religion of Devils incarnate. As the reward for this discovery, and the encouragement to Christianize the heathen nations, the imperial pontiff divided a world, the very geography of which he did not understand, between Spain and Portugal ; and legalized the conquests they should make by a solemn gift of all the countries they should discover on each side of the line of demarcation ; as if the undisputed title of the universe had vested in himself. Thus Africa, India, and the afflicted America, received the first sounds of the name of Christ through a medium that must have excited their terror and abhorrence, instead of winning the first affections of the heart. Such Christians can hardly be said to have enlarged the pale of the Church : they were indeed made slaves to Rome, but continued strangers to that gospel liberty with which Christ has made us free ; and to every real blessing of vital Christianity.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH INTERNALLY.

**A**MIDST the reign of abuses and superstitions of every kind, the state of religion must be grievously debased and depraved, as we behold it. Vice triumphed in *indulgences*, and they who had power to absolve each other, were far from being disposed to inflict severities, from the consciousness of what themselves deserved. All crimes were venial but heresy. A name of most extensive import, and comprising all who doubted the dogmas, or resisted the dominion of the Roman pontiffs; these, the legions of inquisitors pursued with fire and sword; and if they could not utterly extirpate them, they endeavoured to thin their ranks whenever they fell into their hands, by merciless executions.

The extinction of the sciences with the Eastern empire, drove a multitude of men of letters from Constantinople to Italy, who, under the patronage of the famed Medici family especially, served to revive the drooping cause of literature, and produced a considerable change in the sentiments of the students. For, as the Greeks chiefly preferred Plato to Aristotle, and were advanced to the professor's chair in every city and university, they introduced his philosophy, and abated much of

the servile obedience which had been paid to the Stagyrice ; whose opinions and subtleties also often led to dangerous errors, and atheistical or rather pantheistical principles.

The Greek and Latin authors were now brought forth from obscurity, and ably explained ; to which the discovery of the art of printing especially contributed ; first invented by **COSTER**, OF **HAERLEM**, **AN.** 1430, and gradually brought to perfection by **Guttemberg** and **Scoffer** : a wondrous invention, and to which, under God the revival of religion was still more indebted than to any other cause whatever. Learning of every kind now made a vast progress ; the oriental languages were studied ; antiquities explored ; the muses cultivated ; and all the branches of *polite literature* pursued with increasing success and eagerness. But as this comes not into my plan, except as the Church is affected, I shall only observe that the rising sect of **Platonists**, zealous for the honor of their divine master, as he was called, debated sharply with the **Aristotelians**, on the superior excellence of their opinions ; challenging enquiry which of their two systems of philosophy most corresponded with, and had the most favorable influence on Christianity. It must be owned that all philosophic mixtures are very unsuitable with the simplicity of Gospel truth ; but the reveries and mysticisms of the **Platonic school**, were certainly less impious and erroneous, than the atheistical tendency of the **Aristotelian philosophy** ; yet this continued to be the ruling doctrine in the schools, and gratifying to the subtle disputants,

who sought reputation from the niceties of definitions, and sophistical intricacies of metaphysical ideas. These Aristotelians also continued with the same or rather increasing violence their contentions among themselves, as *Nominalists* and *Realists*; adding to arguments, invectives, and enforcing both by battles and bloodshed: such controversies could not but be highly unfriendly to the spirit of truth. Indeed very little that was worth contending for remained, so great was the departure in principle and practice, and such jealousy was expressed at every idea of reformation, as if he who presumed to touch the grossest of sacerdotal abuses, touched the apple of the Church's eye. Yet some daring spirits would not keep silence; and pleaded boldly the cause of Christ against his betrayers, charging the pride, avarice and enormities of Rome and her clergy, as the sin of Sodom, and ready to bring down the divine vengeance on the head and the members. Meantime the offensive schism of the papacy increased. The attempts to heal it by the deposition of the *two* contending pontiffs, and the election of *one* head in their room, added only a *third* to the number: each maintained his sole sovereignty, and condemned his antagonists, and all their adherents, to the flames of hell for ever and ever. AN. 1409. The scandal this occasioned, added to the furious progress of what was called heresy, amidst these confusions, roused the spirit of the Emperor, the Kings of France and England, and other princes, to attempt cleansing the Augean stable of the abuses which had become intolerable; and

healing the divisions which distracted the consciences of the simple and the scrupulous ; dubious to which visible head obedience was due, yet too enslaved by superstition, habit, and the clergy, to cast them altogether off, and settle in their several kingdoms their own ecclesiastical government. Nothing appeared so effectual for these purposes as a general council ; it was accordingly summoned at the instigation of Sigismund, by the Pope last chosen, John XXIII. He opened himself this assembly, at Constance, in the presence of the Emperor, an immensity of bishops and princes, or ambassadors from all the states professing in the West the Christian name.

AN. 1414. As among the first acts of this assembly, the Roman pontiff was decreed subject to a general council, they proceeded to depose John XXIII. for his crimes. Gregory XII. sent in his resignation to prevent his deposition ; and Benedict XIII. refractory, and refusing to submit, was solemnly cast down from his eminence and degraded. A fourth Pope was chosen at the council, Martin V. The vanquished popes struggled for a while, and at last quitted the field to the sole Martin : But, when this first object was secured, the more difficult task still remained, the reformation of abuses in the Pope himself and his clergy, the continuance of which the members of the council, with this pope at their head, were too interested not to maintain ; nor could endure the idea of consenting to any material suppression of claims which must abridge their wealth and power, and subject

their crimes to the cognizance of the civil governors. The crafty Martin, therefore, notwithstanding the hopes he had raised before his election, contrived to elude every effort of reformation, which Gerson, and many other bold speakers, earnestly pressed, and which was generally allowed to be necessary : but the difficulty where to begin, what to amend, where to stop, and how to prevent the heretics from taking occasion of triumph from the confession of abuses, engaged the Pope to dissolve this assembly, after three years and a half sitting and doing nothing of importance, and to defer the work of reform to another council, to be shortly after held for this salutary purpose. AN. 1418.

However, they took care not to part without making some severe examples of heretical punishment. In this they were cordially united, to suppress the dreaded progress of the word of God, and the impudent boldness of those who reproached the clergy by their lives, and upbraided them with their ignorance, avarice and vices.

JOHN HUSS and JEROME of PRAGUE, men of the most exemplary piety, highly eminent in Bohemia, and distinguished members in the university of that city, had made themselves bitter enemies among the clergy, by the sharpness of their rebukes, and the fidelity of their remonstrances. Huss had especially envenomed the see of Rome by his efforts to withdraw the university of Prague from the papal jurisdiction of Gregory XII, as he had offended the Germans by maintaining the rights of the Bohemians



against the other principalities, as having an equality of power with the Bavarians, Poles and Saxons, who each claimed a separate and equal vote, contrary to the original establishment of the University. This dispute had been sharply maintained, and occasioned a vast secession of professors and students to Leipsic, where they erected an university of their own in opposition to Huss, and the Bohemians ; but a still greater number of enemies he had made, with the famed Gerson at their head, for his strong measures in the university of Prague in support of the *Realists*, to which party he belonged, against the *Nominalists*, whose chief in the university of Paris, Gerson was.

All these co-operating causes had raised such a flame, as rendered it dangerous for Huss and Jerome to venture among this envenomed host of enemies ; nor dared they to trust themselves, till fortified with the most solemn safe conduct from the Emperor for their journey thither, and peaceable return. But the clergy, by their intrigues, and the bribes distributed among the fathers and courtiers of Sigismund, contrived to have these revered reformers accused and imprisoned, and after forty days disputation, condemned to the flames, in opposition to the most sacred engagements. Huss was the first victim, and Jerome followed. The clergy had now the opportunity of vengeance, and they resolved not to lose it : a thousand crimes were charged upon these holy men, of heretical pravity ; the real ones for which they suffered, were the offence given to the Pope

and clergy, by their free and vehement censures of their avarice, superstitions and tyranny ; and the fearful effects produced by their preaching, in alienating the minds of multitudes from the Church of Rome, and circulating the works and opinions of the great English heretic, Wickliff, to the danger of the entire subversion of the very foundation of the Roman Catholic faith and dominion.

Nothing short of flames could expiate such enormous crimes. The noble martyrs braved all their insults and torments. Huss observed, “ that they were burning a goose, (for so his name in German signifies) but that God would, from his ashes, raise up a swan, whose singing should affright these vultures.” The application to Luther was evident. Jerome was at first staggered, and induced to make some concessions, but recovering his fortitude, appeared before his persecutors, as Poggius owns, with the face of an angel, and a wisdom and eloquence that none of his adversaries could gainsay or resist ; but his condemnation was decided, and the goodness of his cause but hastened his execution. Huss was burned, July 15, 1415—Jerome burned, May 30, 1416.

These men were disciples of the English reformer Wickliff, espoused his sentiments, and circulated his works with the greatest diligence ; and this was the grand argument for their destruction. The council would gladly have executed the same vengeance on the principal author of heresy ; but he had rested from his labors in the grave. His bones,

therefore, were the only remains on which they could glut their impotent revenge; these were ordered to be dug up and burnt, and the ashes thrown into the Avon.

The administration of the sacrament to the laity in the bread only, was one of the wise decrees of this council.

The Pope would gladly have had no more to do with councils if he could have avoided it; but the clamours for the promised reformation, and the flame which the execution of Huss and Jerome had occasioned, to the great increase of such heretics, compelled the reluctant pontiff to summon a new council at Pavia, from whence it was ultimately removed to Basil, or Basle, in Switzerland, A.N. 1451. But Eugenius, the successor of Martin, alarmed at the vigorous steps with which the council opened, and the claims of superiority made by the fathers; used all his artifices to suspend its operations. The council resolutely proceeded to abolish some of the papal impositions, *annates*, *expectatives*, *reservations* and *provisions*. This exasperated the pontiff beyond all endurance—a quarrel ensued. The fathers of the council summoned the Pope before them; he presumed to dissolve them, and announce a new council to be held at Ferrara. Ecclesiastical thunders now roared afresh: the council deposed the Pope, and the Pope anathematised the council, A.N. 1438. Another Pope was chosen, a new schism divided the papal world. These shameful and absurd

quarrels, merely about pride and power, mark the deplorable state of Christianity.

The schism being once more healed by abdication, the papal claims rose as high as ever ; and Pius II. advanced to the pontifical chair, retracted solemnly all that he had said and written, as *Æneas Sylvius* ; than whom in the council of Basle, there had not been a more zealous partisan for the superiority of councils, and the necessity of reform. But the tiara no sooner encircled his brow, than his eyes were opened to see and lament the heresies of the simple prelate, and to display the zeal and orthodoxy of the sovereign pontiff.

The loss of Constantinople and the progress of the Turks, made the Popes tremble on their throne, and they strove to rouse the slumbering zeal of the princes of their communion in vain. As vain was the attempt to reconcile the divided churches : for though Bessarion, made a cardinal, and others, were gained to the Latin Church, the sturdy body of the Greek prelates disdained obedience to the Roman see ; submitted rather to the Mahomedan government ; and maintained their church's independence.

AN. 1492. BORGIA, the last who filled the papal chair in this century, was a monster of cruelty and impiety ; sticking at nothing to enrich his bastard family, and supporting them in all their atrocities. If the Church was corrupted and debased under other pontiffs, under him it became the abomination of desolation.

The monkish orders were sunk into the dregs of idleness and licentiousness. The different mendicant tribes abusing the credulity of the vulgar, were only intent upon exalting their own order, and the papal supremacy : and all ranks of men, overwhelmed with ignorance and superstition, blindly followed their blind leaders.

The persecution of heretics raged ; and was the most unequivocal proof of religion : to kill all who resisted the Romish hierarchy, was among the most meritorious of services. Thus princes readily aided the inquisitors, and merited titles of distinction from the sovereign pontiffs. New orders still arose ; but heretics multiplied in spite of all the sufferings they endured, and the fresh army of disputants whom they had to encounter. Indeed, it must be confessed, the weapons of argument would have been very feeble and ineffectual, if they had not been seconded by the more powerful syllogisms of fire and imprisonment. The learned and ancient John de Wessalia thus perished in confinement, AN. 1489 ; whilst the more vehement Jerome Savonarola kindled a flame by his testimony against the prevailing abuses, which all his piety, learning and eloquence could not quench ; and his body consumed in the fire could only expiate his offences, AN. 1498. These bloody orgies, now universally practised, added a deeper gloom of horror to the prevailing superstitions. Yet the truth had taken so deep an hold on the consciences of many ; and Wickliff's works had been disseminated with such zeal, and read with

such avidity, that though the inquisitors sought them with eagerness, and the archbishop of Prague at one time burnt no less than two hundred volumes, neither the fear of the inquisitors, nor any other consideration deterred his followers from propagating his books and his doctrines, which, as drawn immediately from the Scriptures of truth, could not but correspond in substance with those which have been since received and established in all the churches of the reformed.

AN. 1420. The Bohemians submitted not passively to the butchery of their apostolic chiefs, resolved to have teachers of their faith, who were like their martyred Huss and Jerome, and to enjoy the ordinance of the Lord's Supper according to its primitive institution. Many of them retired to a steep mountain which they called Tabor, and in despite of popes and councils, communicated together both in bread and wine. Their church increasing by fresh accessions; under the famous Ziska, blind, but wise as intrepid, they defied their enemies, and asserted their liberty to worship God according to their consciences. A bloody war was raised against them, and after dreadful carnage on both sides, they maintained their ground against all their enemies. Unhappily they divided among themselves into two parties; and the crafty Sylvius contrived to detach the Calixtines from the Taborites, by granting them the use of the cup in the communion. The Calixtines indeed were very moderate in their demands, whilst the others insisted upon entire reform of

the subsisting abuses ; the demolition of the sacerdotal tyranny, and the reduction of the ecclesiastical order to its primitive simplicity. Jacobellus, an affectionate disciple of Huss, was at the head of the Calixtines ; Martin Loquis, a Moravian, eminent among the Taborites. Some mistakes and abuses among them, time and experience corrected. These last began to bear the name of *Bohemian Brethren*. They were numbered among the Beghards, and united with Luther and his associates at the reformation. I apprehend the Moravian brethren in Germany and England, are a scion from this stock, and if the ancients at all resembled the moderns, they were the excellent of the earth.

The *schoolmen* and commentators produced nothing worth remembering. Their jargon tended rather to confound the understanding than to convey information ; a kind of literary inanity. The *mystic divines*, with some mixture of fancy and allegory, spoke a language much more intelligible, and which reached the conscience. The well-known book attributed to Thomas a Kempis, received high commendations from Luther, and deservedly ; though whether he, or one Gersen, a Frenchman, were the real author, hath been matter of dispute.

Huss and Savanarola, have left works that speak the hearts of the writers ; but they have been succeeded by men so much advanced in spiritual wisdom and knowledge, that little attention hath been paid to them, or indeed to any of the writers

before Luther. The Church in general continued in great spiritual darkness ; sunk in superstition ; the people, dupes of sacerdotal jugglers ; ready to receive the despotic mandates of popes, and to believe all the absurdities of fraud, and lying miracles, inculcated by priestly craft. And of all crimes, the most dangerous, was the attempt to emancipate the souls of men from this yoke of bondage.



## CHAPTER III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, HERESIES,  
SCHISMS, RITES, AND CEREMONIES.

**T**HE government of the Church was generally now admitted to be under one visible head. And the Roman pontiff made it his undeviating design to subject to the holy see, all persons, civil as well as ecclesiastical, endeavouring to inculcate this maxim, that all lawful power upon earth was derived from Christ, through his vicegerent, the head of the Romish Church. But as we have seen, to this the temporal sovereigns greatly demurred, and the prelatical order was much disposed to raise a barrier against despotism, by exalting a general council above the Pope, as well as all others. This was a sharp bone of contention, and is not yet settled in the popish creed. But it was generally admitted, as one of the heresies to be punished with fire, that the Church of Christ could subsist (as many then zealously maintained) without a visible head at all, sufficiently established under the spiritual and invisible guidance of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. These revolvers from the jurisdiction of Rome, were pursued by all the arms of sophistry, and the schools, the zeal of the mendicants, and the whole body of the clergy; supported by the secular arm of the princes, and the malignity and craft of inquisitors.

Yet their numbers were not diminished by their sufferings. They continued to spread through every part of Christendom ; and nothing contributed more to this, than the obstinate determination of all the ecclesiastics in power to maintain inviolably their claims, as if they were all of divine authority ; and the more contrary they were to every holy and heavenly disposition, and the more they favoured their tyranny and their covetousness, the more tenacious they were of them. Nay, where the abuse was even incapable of vindication, it was still to be maintained, least the heretics should triumph. Thus the matter became desperate, and drove necessarily to the great revolt, which was preparing.

The Greeks and Latins contended fierce as ever. The attempts to subjugate the one to the other, awakened jealousy, and envenomed resentment. The East laid all its miseries to the insensibility of their brethren in not flying to their assistance ; and complained, that whilst the Roman pontiffs were grasping at supremacy, Constantinople was lost.

The Franciscans and Dominicans still viewed each other with the eye of rivals. And whether *the blood of Christ, shed on the cross, was a part of his divine nature, and to be worshipped*, occasioned a new and bitter controversy, which the Pope found it so difficult to decide, that he could only enjoin silence on the noisy disputants, and bid them wait his infallible decision on the subject, which was never intended to be given.

The multitude of heretics afforded abundant labour for the inquisitors. The *Fratricelli*, a branch of the sect of *spiritual Franciscans*, gave them much employment. The *Waldenses*, through many European provinces, were carefully hunted up and punished, and suppressed wherever their meetings were discovered. The *Brethren of the Free Spirit* wandered about Germany, and many things are reported of them impure, and highly fanatical; whether true or false, it is hard to determine. The *White Brethren*, so called from their dress, paraded with a cross at their head. The leader of this sect is said to have been a Scotchman, probably one of the Wickliffites; and they went in procession from city to city in immense multitudes, praying and singing, and were received with much reverence and hospitality. In Italy, the Pope contrived to seize their head, who was brought to Rome, and burnt as a heretic, and those who followed him dispersed. In various places, especially at Brussels, similar associations were formed, by those who called themselves *men of understanding*. Whatever were their errors, we are sure the part most exceptionable to the inquisitors, will have our approbation rather than censure, viz.—“That Christ alone merited eternal life for us, by his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and not man by his own doings or duties.” “That Christ alone can absolve a sinner, and not the priest.” And, “that penance could never procure salvation.

The Flagellantes, or *Whippers*, also continued to disturb the peace, and provoke inquisitorial ani-

madversion ; and not a few of them were cast into the fire. Such inhumanity was called zeal for the Church ; and to delay accusing or punishing heretics, brought a suspicion of orthodoxy.

The Church, loaded with ceremonies, needed the pruning hook ; but every Pope exercised his invention to add something to the number, in order to distinguish his pontificate. The *transfiguration*—the grant of indulgencies for observing the *festival of the immaculate conception*, A. N. 1456, with a number of new forms of prayers in honor of that good woman, already sufficiently bedizened, enlarged the popish ritual, A. N. 1476. Indeed, the whole of religious worship was become a solemn mockery of trifling postures, vain repetitions, and a pageantry of dress and ceremony.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

AS we advance nearer to the dawn of the Reformation, the abuses so atrocious of the false church, begin to force themselves more and more on observation. And, though they were more easily discovered than amended, yet the evidence of their subsistence, and the means employed to suppress complaint, though it smothered the fire of discontent, only prepared for a more terrible explosion. The flames with which the pretended heretics were encircled, cast a luminous glory around the dying martyrs, and rendered their words and examples more deeply impressed on those who beheld their faith and patience, and shuddered with horror at at their bloody executioners, and the clergy, the instigators of the persecution. The good Lord Cobham, a chief among the Wickliffites, was hanged and burnt without Temple-Bar, having been delivered over to the secular arm ; AN. 1416. His sufferings contributed to quicken the zeal of the timid, and to rouse to imitation of such exalted virtue. In England, repeated acts of parliament respecting the followers of Wickliff, the councils of archbishops and bishops in censuring his tenets and those that maintained them, demonstrated the number of those who openly embraced and defended

them ; and the immensity of tracts disseminated by Wickliff, as well as the translation of the Scriptures, which the art of printing tended more easily to multiply, notwithstanding all the copies that were burnt by the inquisitors, spread mightily the truth as it is in Jesus, and opened up the sores of the leprous church, which were putrid and corrupt, through the foolishness, luxury, pride, and avarice, of the head and the members. Many of the great men in England highly approved the zealous reformer : among these were the Duke of Lancaster, and the Queen Ann of Luxembourg : and our first poets also, Gower and Chaucer, are said to have been his disciples. The parliament itself remonstrated against the papal plunder, and the King, Henry VII. resolutely set himself to resist the usurpations of Rome ; shocked, on examination, to find his kingdom eaten up by foreign locusts, intruded into all ecclesiastic benefices by popish *reservations*. But the dread of the anathemas of the holy see held still the consciences of men in thralldom. A few, and but a few, emancipated their minds from these vain terrors.

Blessed be God ! these happy commencements in England rested not there. The works of Wickliff crossed the seas, and were eagerly read and circulated on the Continent. The famous Huss and Jerome of Prague, fell, as we have seen, martyrs for the truth ; but multitudes in Bohemia steadily adhered to their teachers. By force, or cajoleries, both Calixtines and Taborites were at last appeased ; they were indulged in some of their

desires, respecting the communion in both kinds ; and led to hope for more. The books, however, of their faithful pastors still circulated among them ; and, reduced as they were, to an apparent external conformity, the spirit of the church rulers, and the doctrines which they inculcated, were utterly different from what the Bohemian brethren had embraced ; and they were prepared to seize the first moment of emancipation from ecclesiastical tyranny.

The vallies of Piedmont contained a hidden treasure, which all the inquisition had not been able to discover or to rob. And the doctrines taught by these witnesses for the truth, which had spread through the South of France, were such as could not but produce the same divine effects, wherever they are embraced in the light, and in the love of them. It would lead me too far to enter upon all the charges brought against Wickliff, Huss, and their fellows ; but a few of them will mark strongly the spirit of the men, and of their disciples. We plead for no faultless monsters ; they were, like ourselves, compassed with infirmity ; but their hearts cleaved steadfastly to the Lord, and under a great fight of afflictions they fainted not, but resisted unto blood.

*The enormities of the popish hierarchy, against which they testified, were the great object of the rising witnesses, and the cause of the invetracy of their enemies against them : But the doctrines of free grace, held by the reformers, were no less*

abhorred by the ignorant and self-righteous. Marsilius of Padua, had long before strongly maintained, that believers are justified by grace alone, and that human works never were the efficient cause of salvation. Wickliff was charged with teaching,  
 “ That the Church consisted only of the elect—  
 “ That those, like Paul, belong to it, who are the  
 “ predestined and chosen vessels, even before their  
 “ conversion—That no reprobate is found in it—  
 “ That the true members never fail finally, though  
 “ for a time they may be tempted and turned  
 “ aside—That the Eucharist is not the *real body* of  
 “ Christ, but the *sign* of it—That Rome hath  
 “ no more right to jurisdiction than any other  
 “ church—That the gospel alone was sufficient  
 “ to direct the Christian’s faith and conduct—  
 “ That all prelatical imprisonment was anti-chris-  
 “ tian tyranny—and, *that in the conduct of his soul,*  
 “ *every man had a right to judge for himself.*”

The articles of accusation against Huss were in exact correspondence with these, as may be seen in Toplady’s *Historic Proof*. He held also, that there was no necessity for a visible head of the Church to govern it, nor the least colour for it in Scripture—and said he wished his spirit with the happy soul of Wickliff.

The letter of Poggius, the Pope’s secretary, to Aretin, on the defence and condemnation of Jerome, is one of the noblest testimonies which truth ever extorted from an adversary. Yet, innocence is a weak defence, and truth a feeble protection, when spiritual wickedness in high



places tramples upon the humble. But there is a God that judgeth the earth. Their disciples continued a faithful band, and, under the name of Taborites, having boldly resisted their persecutors, sometimes retaliated upon them the cruelties which they had suffered. They afterwards settled down into a more peaceable state, and put on a gentler spirit. Having new modelled their church into a more evangelical system, they were denominated *Bohemian Brethren*; and from them the *Moravian Brethren* of the present day derive their succession.

A living Church subsisted, which neither the craft nor violence of men was permitted to destroy; in so many lands was the knowledge of truth diffused, that, though despised by the insolent, and trampled upon by the proud, it had taken such fast root as never to be eradicated, and waited only the moment of opportunity to burst forth and blossom as the rose.

Thus closed the Fifteenth Century, with superstition triumphant; power in the hands of oppressors; abuses grown inveterate by long ages of prescription; the clergy corrupt beyond conception; ignorance maintained with sacred jealousy among the people, and learning itself hardly daring to pry into the mysteries of iniquity established by law and custom. A feeble band, dispersed and distressed, yet struggled for life, and preserved only by a divine and gracious Provi-

dence, still kept alive the vital spark. The fire, long smothered, was not however ready to burst out into a flame ; and, destined, we trust, to consume the wood and hay and stubble of superstition, will continue to shine brighter and stronger unto the perfect day.

## PERIOD THIRD.

THE HAPPY REVIVAL OF EVANGELICAL RELIGION, FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT DAY.

### CENTURY XVI.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

**A**FTER toiling through a long dismal night of papal darkness, and regions of the shadow of death, a beam of Gospel day, as the morning spread upon the mountains, revives the drooping spirits.

AN. 1503—1516. The savage BORGIA, the mad warrior JULIUS, and the epicurian LEO, sat in succession, enthroned amidst all their insolence and abuses ; and, trampling on the prostrate world, defied their enemies, despised their impotence, and gloried in the stability of an empire confirmed by ages of superstition, and strengthened by legions of monks and clergy, whose terrors overawed the consciences of mankind.

Not that the world was quite insensible of the chains in which they were held : many a sovereign complained of the encroachments of pontifical ambition ; numerous writers attacked the flagrant abuses of the Church, sometimes with the strong arms of reasoning, and sometimes with the keen shafts of ridicule, for which the follies of monkery furnished an ample scope. Not a nation but uttered its groans under the papal exactions, impoverished to supply the rapine, the luxury, and the ambitious projects of the Roman prélates. Unmoved and tranquil, the omnipotent pontiffs looked down from their high and lofty throne on the suppliant herd, treated their murmurs with disdain, and their requests for reformation with inattention ;—sufficiently armed to punish the refractory, and having every engine of preferment and wealth to gain the mercenary, to silence the troublesome, and to increase the number of their zealous partisans. Canon law, long prescription, and the reverence consecrated by the character assumed and universally admitted of being *Christ's vicegerent upon earth*, surrounded the papacy with an apparently impenetrable barrier. The mighty Pontiffs sat secure in the exercise of unlimited power, and knew, that whatever redress was sought, must come through their own hands, be courted as a favour, and granted under such conditions as they were pleased to dictate.

A feeble attempt to form a general council at Pisa, by Lewis of France, and Maximilian the Emperor, only tended to shew the weakness of

opposition, and the impotence of all efforts to reform. The Pope, in the most insulting manner, annulled their decrees, and dissolved their assembly, treating them with equal contempt and arrogance.

LEO X, a man of letters and a man of pleasure, who succeeded the imperious Julius, and presided at the Lateran council which his predecessor had assembled, not only took care that not a hair abuse should be touched, but prevailed on Francis I. to sacrifice the Gallican liberties, by substituting in place of the *Pragmatic Sanction*, a new agreement, called the *Concordate*, abhorred alike by the French people and clergy. So supreme was the papal dominion over that nation, which had most resolutely resisted its usurpations.

The amazing prodigality, luxury and magnificence of Leo, began, however, to exhaust the Church's coffers; and, as money must be procured to supply his extravagances, the never-failing resource of indulgences was resorted to, as the most effectual means of levying a tribute upon the whole Christian world, under the specious guise of conferring the most important spiritual benefits.

The profligate examples of so many viceregents of Christ, could not but have the direst effects on the clergy, whom they supported in their abuses, and were reciprocally supported by them. An incredible dissolution of manners followed the loss of all divine principle. Leo X. himself appears

to have been an infidel, if not an atheist, to which his learning did not a little contribute. When the heart is enslaved by corruption, the more ingenious and scientific the man is, the readier will he be to find arguments to quiet his conscience, and to soothe it in the pursuits which he resolves not to abandon. His sacerdotal legions were not unfaithful followers of their leader ; and, as the churches and monasteries wallowed in wealth, they failed not to use their affluence in procuring for themselves every gratification ; whilst the best informed could not but laugh at the superstitious piety which had furnished them with the means of indulgence, and enjoy the delusion of the Christian world.

As every preferment at Rome was venal, the rich, the licentious, and the profligate, would naturally be the first purchasers ; and the highest offices devolved upon the basest, and most unworthy.

The immensity of the mendicant tribes grew into a burden, which the Christian world could with difficulty support ; and, as every art and device were practised, to procure veneration for their several orders, and to fleece the public more abundantly, the most scandalous deceptions were employed, and the grossest frauds attempted, to impose on the credulity of mankind. Sometimes they were detected and punished, as in the case of the infamous Dominican, Jetzer : but oftener the trick succeeded, and the foolish people cried, " A MIRACLE ! "

As the Dominicans and Franciscans had chiefly usurped dominion in the schools and universities, theological knowledge was sunk into quotations from the fathers, or disputes about points of the most trivial import, delivered in all the jargon of scholastic philosophy. And, though science revived in a number of literati, such as Erasmus, Agrippa, and others, who, renouncing the subtleties of Aristotle and Plato, with the barren erudition of the dialectics, read and thought for themselves; yet, the current of education still flowed through these polluted channels, and left the miserable pupils groping for the wall as blind; burdening their memories with terms, definitions, and distinctions, which communicated nothing of real knowledge, but abundance of conceit and dispute.

*The ministry of the pure word of God was no longer to be found. The very semblance of it would have been branded as heresy: all pulpits were occupied with panegyrics on the saints; the transcendant glories and powers of the Virgin; the efficacy of relics for the expulsion of demons from the possessed; and the cure of all diseases of body and mind: the virtues of those of the neighbouring church or convent, were sure to be peculiarly insisted upon. The fire of purgatory afforded an inexhaustible fund of the terrific; and the safety of indulgencies was displayed in the most moving strains of plaintive eloquence: whilst good works were enforced with all their meritorious efficacy, and the building a church, or a convent, or some rich endowment of them, cancelled every crime,*

and infallibly secured salvation. But above all, the honour of the clergy, the sanctity of the Church, her unity and visibility in one head, and unlimited submission to his decrees : *this* was taught as the perfection of Christian excellence ; as it was the depth of heretical pravity, and sure to be followed with the destruction of body and soul in hell, to doubt of one of the dogmas of Rome, or to withdraw a tittle of obedience from the holy see and its pontiffs.

The miserable people, bound in chains of ignorance and superstition, submitted to be priest-ridden with the most exemplary patience ; and, whilst they were amused with the raree show of the *mass*, and *processions*, and *mysteries*, gloried in the purity of the Catholic faith, and were led to entertain with sacred horror the idea of any alteration in the Church. The clergy fostered with all their art an ignorance so favourable to their empire, and carefully watched over every attempt to enlighten the minds of the people with Gospel truth, or to correct their manners by divine principles. The more profligate they were, the more they needed absolution, and must recur to their ghostly guides for peace and pardon. Thus the Church reaped the richest harvest from the purchase of her indulgences, as the universal immorality of mankind made them more necessary for the various culprits.

But, as the darkest moment of the night precedes the dawn of day, when the Church appear-



ed in the most desperate situation, her deliverance was approaching from this worse than Babylonish captivity. We have seen, during the preceding ages, here and there, a spark struck from the Scriptures of truth, that gave a momentary gleam. And though the inquisition, with all its terrors, and the slavish submission of the monarchs of Christendom, seemed to uphold the pillars of the Roman see with Atlantean shoulders, the utter rottenness of the foundation awaited only a bold and resolute hand to make the mighty fabric totter. Indeed, the silent and unnoticed dispensations of God had been preparing for the event, however, to human view unexpected and judged impossible. A variety of attempts at reformation had been made; and though generally suppressed, the spirit of opposition remained. Wickliffites, Albigenses, and all the persecuted, hid their heads from the thunders which they were unable to resist; but they waited the auspicious moment, and only sought for the intrepid leader, and the opportunity to burst their bonds asunder. The glaringness of the abuses was secretly deplored by multitudes, who, without any purpose of change in the ecclesiastical government, sighed for salutary reform. The diffusion of knowledge, through the art of printing, removed the veil which had been spread over all people. The Scriptures themselves were not so inaccessible as before, and many dared to read and think for themselves. The governors of the world, without any intention of separating themselves from the unity of the Church, were not at all indisposed to hear of plans of reformation, which might prevent

their kingdoms from becoming the prey of the Roman pontiffs and their legates ; and, therefore, were in no haste to suppress the zeal of those reforming preachers, whom they supposed themselves always able to controul : whilst the pride and security of the papal throne too much despised the meanness of its opponents, and the feebleness of their resources.

AN. 1513. Such was the state of Christendom, when the increasing wants and rapaciousness of the Roman see made it necessary to attempt replenishing her coffers ; and fresh orders were issued to the legates every where, to find the best qualified instruments, to preach and dispense the rich indulgencies, which Leo X. in his great munificence, was disposed to grant to all Christian people, who had money to purchase them, for all sins, past, present and to come. All the mendicant monks were invited to undertake this lucrative commission, and the Dominicans engaged in it with peculiar zeal and activity. As the legates were only careful about the end, how to get the most money ; and little scrupulous about the means, provided they led to this object, they selected for this service instruments the best calculated to impose upon the credulity of the vulgar : men of popular talents, unblushing effrontery, and perfect devotedness to the Roman see. Among these the Archbishop of Mentz found the famous monk, John Tetzel ; whose craft equalling his impudence, he undertook the task with wondrous alacrity and success, and exalted the value of the favours which

he was dispensing, with an eloquence, and exaggerated commendations of the efficacy of his indulgencies, that could not but produce among the superstitious multitude innumerable customers. He blazoned the virtues of the saints in colours of the most transcendent glory ; vaunted the rich treasures of merit, now opening from the Church's repository ; of which the keys were to HIM entrusted. He could exceed all wants ; supply all deficiencies, and cancel all crimes. He boasted his ability to save even the ravisher of the blessed Virgin herself ; and affirmed, that HE, *John Tetzel*, had rescued more souls from hell and purgatory, by these complete nostrums of indulgencies, than ever St. Peter himself had converted to Christianity by his preaching. The gaping crowd heard with wonder this matchless knight of the golden key, and sent up their money to the stage, to purchase with avidity these precious packets of ecclesiastical panaceas, which were to set their consciences at rest for ever.

An inconsiderable monk at Wittemberg heard with indignation these hyperbolical pretensions. He belonged to the Augustin order, and for his learning and talents had been raised to the professorship of divinity, in the academy of that city, by Frederic, Elector of Saxony. MARTIN LUTHER, a name for ever to be revered by every real Christian, resolved to check this impudent mountebank in his career ; and not to suffer him in the city where *he* held the divinity chair, to propagate blasphemies, so opposite to all revealed

truth, without rebuke. He, therefore, challenged him in ninety-five propositions, to defend himself and his pontifical employers, whom Luther dared to censure as accomplices, for suffering such impostures, and countenancing such abominable frauds and impositions on the people. AN. 1517.

Thus was the gauntlet thrown down, and the first blow struck of that battle, which hath continued to rage ever since, and, after so many turns and changes, appears ready to be decided in the final subversion of papal tyranny, reduced, *now that I am writing*, to the dust of contempt, and approaching, I hope, its utter extinction.

Never was a man more formed for the contest in which he was engaged with the see of Rome, than this brave Saxon. His faculties were singularly great : his memory prodigious ; his mind fraught with the richest stores of ancient wisdom and literature, to which he had addicted himself ; but above all he was deeply read in the oracles of God, and conversant with the best of the fathers and their writings, particularly St. Augustin, the patron of his order. His natural temper was strong and irascible ; his courage invincible ; his eloquence powerful as his voice ; and darting the lightnings of his arguments on his confounded opponents. No dangers intimidated him ; no difficulties, trials or emergencies deprived him of self-possession ; in perseverance unshaken, in labours indefatigable. Rome knew not the Hercules in the cradle, that was ready to strangle her snakes, and at first despised such impotent efforts. Nor

did he himself know his own strength, or suspect or intend the consequences, which would result from this small commencement. But if God will work, none can let it ; and any instrument is sufficient, though it were but the jaw-bone of an ass, when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon the appointed Sampson. Yet, though God works according to the counsels of his own will, we see how wonderfully he provides and qualifies the proper subjects for their peculiar services ; and albeit, the success is wholly from himself, we cannot but admire the instruments he employs.

Malignity and hatred of Gospel truth, have not only suggested to popish adversaries, but to more respected protestants, through infidel historians, that Luther, in his opposition to Tetzels, was animated not by zeal for truth, but mean envy for the glory of his order, neglected by a preference of the Dominicans. Even admitting the charge, the providence of God in over-ruling human evil for purposes of his own glory, would not be the less adorable ; but the facts are false upon which such charges have been founded ; nor did Luther's most envenomed enemies dare reproach him in that day, with this degrading suggestion.

Indeed the matter admitted of an easy temperament, had it been merely a dispute kindled by ambition, between individuals, or their orders. Leo might have healed the breach by the slightest concessions or modification : for Luther disputed not the power of the pontiff to absolve from all church

punishments ; and only urged that final salvation was attainable by the merits of Christ alone, and *the penance performed by the offender* : so dark at first were his own views of acceptance with God : but the matter was of the Lord, and therefore not slightly to be healed. The insolent security of the pontiff led him to neglect the extinguishing of the first spark ; and when dispute had blown that spark into a flame, all the deluge of waters from the mouth of the dragon became unable to quench the conflagration.

This was the age of dispute and violence. The propositions maintained at Wittemberg, not only offended Tetzel, but his order, and all the furious partisans of Rome. A host rushed into the battle to bear down the despised monk of Saxony, with their eloquence, their arguments, and church authority. Prierio, Hoogstraet, Eckius, zealous Romanists, with many others, displayed their zeal for the Catholic faith, and their abhorrence of its impugner : whom they humbly prayed the Pope to commit to the flames, and silence his blasphemies against authority. But Luther was neither a man to be intimidated by threatening, or to be borne down by the violence of these envenomed disputants. He hurled back upon them the thunders they darted at him ; refuted their arguments, and treated their persons with sovereign contempt. Yet to the Pope he held the most respectful language, as a dutiful son, and as advancing nothing which he would not retract the moment he was convinced of its contrariety to the Catholic faith.

Whether the Pope thought this one of the many nonsensical quarrels which would die away of themselves, as others had done before ; or that it was beneath his dignity to pay attention to so inconsiderable an individual ; no reply was made to Luther's letters ; and Leo was only roused from his security, by the information received from the Emperor Maximilian, that all Germany was in a flame ; and that something must be done to suppress it without delay.

Teazed with these remonstrances, the indignant pontiff quitted the couch of indolence, to order to his presence the impertinent reformer. But Luther, who knew the court of Rome too well to trust himself in her clutches, prevailed on the Elector of Saxony, who favoured him and his opinions, to apply to the Pope for the decision of the cause in Germany, before the proper tribunal, where it had originated. Leo, unwilling to offend a man of whose influence he might stand in need, consented to refer the matter to his legate CAJETAN, at Augsburg, than whom he could not have chosen a more improper umpire ; a Dominican, the declared friend of Tetzel, and the enemy of Luther. Before him, however, the intrepid monk pleaded his cause, and, as might be expected, instead of being heard with candor, and answered with temper, the legate, with the tone of insolent authority, commanded him to abjure his opinions as erroneous, and submit humbly to the penance that should be enjoined him by the holy see. AN. 1518.

The high spirit of the Reformer was not at all disposed to submit to such arrogant dictates ; and convinced how fruitless it was to reason, and how dangerous to resist, he silently decamped from Augsburg, and took refuge in Saxony, lodging his appeal with Leo, when he should be better informed of the merits of the controversy.

To silence this vexatious dispute, Leo issued his decree commanding universal submission to the authority of Rome, as capable alike of delivering her subjects *from all punishment whatever, whether in this world or that which is to come* ; and therefore forbidding this article of faith to be ever more brought into contest. Luther had therefore now only to submit, do penance, or appeal to a higher tribunal. He chose the latter, and referred himself and his cause to the next general council.

The Pope too late perceived the error of appointing Cajetan as umpire, and determined to heal, if possible, a dispute which threatened to produce perilous consequences. He sent, therefore, a new legate into Saxony, MILTITZ, a man admirably calculated to repair the breach by his dexterity and his gentleness ; and being a Saxon knight, he could not but be particularly acceptable to the elector and his chaplain. By him Leo sent the consecrated golden rose to Frederic, the peculiar mark of his regard ; and Miltitz softening down the rigid temper of the Reformer by complaisance, engaged him to write a submissive letter to the Pope, from whom he received a most condescending epistle in return.



The strongest hopes were now entertained, that the matter would end to the satisfaction of the Roman see, and this rebellion be quelled, as easily as the former ones ; but God had in mercy otherwise ordained.

Luther, whose views had not yet probably reached to any extended reformation, and who would have been well satisfied with the removal of the grosser abuses of *indulgences*, was so won upon by the frankness and kind treatment of Miltitz and Leo, that he consented to be silent on the subject in dispute, if his adversaries were obliged to the same ; and he offered to write a general circular letter to all whom he could influence, reverentially to obey the church of Rome. So near to an accommodation were matters brought through the prudence of Miltitz, when the fury of bigotry happily precluded all reconciliation. AN. 1519.

Eckius, the partisan of Rome, had challenged Carlostadt, the faithful colleague of Luther, to dispute at Leipsic, on the deep subject of *free-will*. The day was fixed ; the combatants sharpened their weapons of controversy ; the champions advanced to the field of battle : the university, and a splendid auditory, attended the solemn decision, *respecting the powers and freedom of the human-will*. Luther appeared as second to his friend.

Carlostadt maintained, that since the fall, we had no ability for good, but what was derived from divine grace. Eckius asserted a native power of

self-determining volition to concur with, or resist the divine operations. The one was the advocate for the *sovereignty and efficacy of grace*, the other for the *power and merit of man in his co-operation*.

A second conflict followed between Eckius and Luther, *on the authority of the Roman see over the consciences of men*. And, as was the custom of the times, the dispute was sharp, and leading to dangerous positions. Eckius, once the intimate friend, now became the implacable adversary of Luther, and sought to blacken him by every imputation of heretical pravity. Hoffman, the rector of the university, and the moderator of the disputes, dared not decide on these difficult subjects and dangerous enquiries. It became a drawn battle; so both parties retired from the contest with most determined adherence to their own opinion, and pretended triumph over their adversaries; and abundantly more distant from and embittered against each other than when they began.

The amiable and gentle Melancthon was among the auditors of this renowned dispute. He had before approved of Luther's scriptural mode of treating theological subjects, and this great conflict confirmed him in the rectitude of the positions which Luther maintained. For ever afterwards he ranked on the side of the reformers, though his yielding temper, his love of peace, and some educational prejudices respecting church unity and schism, led him sometimes into concessions injurious to the cause which he defended. Naturally

of a timorous spirit, he dreaded the consequences of division ; but, in an hour of danger, no man looked death in the face with greater intrepidity. He was a character more suited to a peaceable state of the Church, than to bustle and contend in the days of difficulty and turbulence.

As noble a monument of faithfulness in the cause of God and truth, had already sprung up in Switzerland, ZUINGLIUS. Though not alike famed with the German reformer, he may justly rank his equal in piety, in learning his superior. He had from early youth been shocked at the established superstitions around him, and having devoted himself to the Church, he began before Luther, to explain the scriptures to the people, and to censure with great fidelity, though with becoming temper, the errors of the church of Rome. His scientific attainments and holy conversation, commanded the distinguished respect of his countrymen, and he was early advanced to a stall in the church of Zurich, where his example was as eminently good as his abilities and labours were confessedly great. The very causes which roused the zeal of Luther, acted upon him in a similar way, and on the like occasion. An impudent Italian was carrying on the same shameful traffic of indulgences, and met with as warm an opposer in Zuinglius, as Tetzel had found in Luther. Nor was he a man of a less intrepid spirit, though tempered with greater self-command, and in point of extensive knowledge, as it appears by his works, pre-eminent. To him Switzerland was chiefly indebted for the light of

the Gospel ; and his vigorous exhortations engaged the magistracy to cast off the yoke of Rome, and assert their liberty.

While thus the holy flame was kindling at different corners of the earth ; and the wiles of the crafty as well as the arm of power employed to extinguish it, Eckius, infuriate with rage, hasted to Rome, and backed by all the influence of the Dominicans and the inquisitors, carried to Leo his bitter accusations against Luther, and urged the necessity of suppressing so dangerous a heretic by the papal anathemas, before the contagion should spread too wide to admit of a remedy. Leo, too indolent to resist the importunities of those who surrounded him, and flattered by the confidence of the facility with which he might silence this troublesome Reformer, signed the bull which fulminated excommunication against Luther's person, and ordered the ignominious burning of all his writings. Sixty days respite only were allowed him to abjure, repent, and cast himself on the mercy of the pontiff.

Luther, whom the gentle treatment of Miltitz might have won, was filled with indignation, when this sentence was notified to him. And, having taken a decided resolution, he determined to separate from the Romish communion, and to do it in the most public manner, in order to testify his contempt of the Pope and his authority, whilst he renewed his appeal to the next general council for his justification. Before the sixty days therefore were expired, he summoned a vast concourse of all ranks, curious to be present at so singular a

ceremony, and kindling a fire, he, by the hands of the hangman committed to it, in presence of them all, the Pope's bull, with the sacerdotal code of canons and decretals, as renouncing henceforth all authority of Rome and her pontiffs; a step suited to his daring spirit; and wise as undaunted. AN. 1520. Temporising measures were as uncongenial to the man, as ill-suited to the object he had in view. He wished to rouse a spirit of resolute opposition to these tyrannical mandates; to show they might be despised with impunity: whilst by his appeal to a general council, he interested in his favor all who regarded that as the supreme judge of controversy; agreeably to what had been decided at the councils of Basil and Constance. Thus his renunciation of Leo's authority, prevented not his professing firm attachment to the *Catholic Church*, and readiness to abide by the impartial decisions of an unprejudiced council.

A second bull, as soon as the sixty days expired, sealed the final damnation of the obstinate heretic; and met the same contempt as the former. Indeed, so far from intimidating the zealous Reformer, it sharpened his resentment, and roused him to more vigorous exertions, to rescue from these unchristian procedures a body of his countrymen, sufficient to erect a barrier against his enemies, and to form a church more resembling the apostolic model in doctrine and discipline, than that which he had formally renounced. Happily he found a number of the ablest scholars, as well as most excellent men of the age, ready to join in the necessary re-

form, to which the weight of Melancthon's influence greatly contributed. The more the subject was canvassed, the more the groundless pretensions of the papacy were detected ; and the frauds and superstitions of its supporters brought to light, and exposed to the people ; who received with avidity the doctrine of the Reformers, and formed a phalanx around them, which defended them from their bloody pursuers. Nor were the princes of the empire, catholic as they were, averse to see some of the pontifical claims disputed ; whilst Frederick of Saxony, who had embraced the truth taught by Luther and his colleagues, afforded them all the protection in his power, without committing himself entirely as a partisan.

AN. 1519. Charles V. of Spain, raised to the imperial throne chiefly by the zeal and favour of Frederick, in opposition to his competitor Francis I. King of France, was unwilling to disoblige a friend, to whom he was so greatly indebted, and therefore, though hard pressed by the Pope to seize and execute this daring rebel against authority, Charles, at the request of Frederick, consented that Luther should be judged by a German tribunal ; for which purpose, a diet of the princes, ecclesiastical and temporal, assembled at Worms. AN. 1521. There the culprit fenced with a safe conduct from the Emperor, boldly appeared in person to plead his own cause before that august assembly. Many of his friends dreaded the encounter ; fearing his own impetuosity would provoke enmity ; and knowing the savage cruelty of his judges, ready to

violate the safe conduct, in order to glut their revenge, as in the case of Huss and Jerome, dissuaded him from appearing : but his confidence in the goodness of his claims, made him court rather than shun such a public opportunity of pleading the cause of God and truth : and his courage engaged him fearlessly to declare, that, “ if he met as many “ devils at Worms, as there were tiles on the “ houses, they should not deter him from doing “ his duty.”

Yet he charmed his friends as much as he confounded his enemies, by the firmness and temperance of his defence, as well as by the eloquence and force of argument which he displayed on this occasion. Charles, who was compelled to flatter Leo, sought by every soothing caress and earnest solicitation, to engage Luther to submit to the Pope. But when he found him inflexible, he menaced him with all the wrath of Rome and the Empire. The undaunted champion firmly, but coolly replied, that “ whenever his opinions were “ proved erroneous, from the word of God, “ and his conduct criminal against Christ or his “ Church, he would ask nothing more to testify “ the deepest humiliation ; but till then, no man “ had a right to censure or condemn him.” The Emperor, too generous to violate his safe conduct, permitted him to depart ; but the unanimous suffrage of the diet denounced the most condign punishment on the obstinate heretic ; and on all who should entertain, support, or conceal him ; deciding absolutely, that *the Pope was the sole judge of*

*religious controversy in the Christian world.* A tenet so expressly contrary to the Germanic liberties, and the received councils, as shocked many of those who would not at all have cared about the case of such an inconsiderable individual.

His kind friend and protector, Frederic, who dreaded the consequence of Luther's falling into the hands of his enemies, contrived to waylay him as he returned from the diet ; and, seized by men in masks, who were in the secret, he was carried off to the castle of Wartenberg, and hid for ten months from all pursuit and discovery. There he employed his leisure and retirement in translating the New-Testament, and keeping up the spirit of his friends by letters. His disappearing in this sudden manner, raised strong suspicion of his being made away with by his enemies, and tended to increase the general odium of the people against them ; whilst his zealous disciples exerted themselves with greater activity than ever, in spreading the principles of the reformation ; to which the absence of the Emperor Charles, whom his own political engagements called away from Germany, greatly contributed. He had, indeed, at that time, providentially, too many immediate concerns of importance to himself to occupy his attention, and no leisure to arrest the progress of reformation.

Carlostadt, the friend and colleague of Luther, during his retirement at Wartenberg, took the lead in the work of reformation ; and as its progress was rapid, he improved the advantage of the influence



which he had acquired, and resolved to cast down the images which had been so long the objects of popular adoration in the churches, and to expel the idolatrous mass. His own intemperate zeal, or rather that of his followers, is said to have occasioned much matter of offence, by proceeding in too tumultuary a manner; Luther himself sharply condemned their proceedings; and, unable to lie any longer concealed, whilst Carlostadt was thus daring to oppose the papal abuses, he left his hiding place, and set himself again at the head of the reformed.

Some have charged Carlostadt with temerity, and Luther with envy at his activity, and with jealousy lest he should supplant him in the public opinion: and nothing is more probable than that *they* were men of like passions with ourselves: we plead for no faultless monsters of monkish perfection; but good men as Carlostadt, might expect to have their zeal branded with intemperance; and the spirit of Luther in his retirement, might surely be roused by a nobler principle than envy, to return to the work openly, and put his life in his hand. He might also reasonably fear, that a too precipitate conduct would injure the cause which they had equally at heart; or they might differ in opinion without evil. I confess I have always honored Carlostadt as a zealous instrument in the reformation: in learning, he was Luther's equal; in some of his opinions respecting the Eucharist, more scriptural; and only beneath him in that

commanding popularity of address, which no man of that day possessed like Luther.

During these commotions, one great character, which all desired to draw over to their party, conscious of the weight of his influence, maintained a suspicious neutrality. ERASMUS, whom the keenness of his wit, the acuteness of his genius, and the depth of his learning, raised to the pinnacle of universal admiration, had, before Luther arose, begun to sharpen the shafts of ridicule against the monkish ignorance and abuses ; by his writings he had greatly loosened the shackles of blind veneration for the mendicant tribes, and prepared men's minds for the reformation. To him, Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers, warmly addressed themselves. He answered them with all civility, but with the most wary caution not to commit himself as a favourer of their cause ; though he professed to admit the chief doctrines which they promulged, and to acknowledge the necessity of a reform, to which no man had more contributed by their writings than himself. Yet he dreaded a rupture with the pontiff ; and flattered himself the object would be accomplished by the necessity of the case, without violence. He would have been content with *some concessions*, and trembled at the rude hand of hasty reform. His study and books delighted him more than the activity of a labourer in the vineyard ; and his temper indisposed him for the stormy ocean, which Luther dared to brave. He professed a high veneration for the bold Reformer ; and though he shunned all intimacy that

would have exposed him to reproach, he did not scruple to condemn the injustice and folly of the treatment which Luther had received from Leo ; and plainly manifested his apprehensions, that the enmity of the sacerdotal tribe, more than any real errors of the monk, was the cause of his condemnation. He dreaded also, that the precipitation of Luther would bring him to an untimely end, as it had done so many preceding witnesses for the truth ; and that the consequences would be fatal to the cause ; and probably the cowardice of his own spirit made him fear to be involved in the dangers which he apprehended. He maintained a cautious reserve on the subject of Luther's writings, and though he condemned the man, because the Church had condemned him, and censured the violence of his proceedings, he declined answering the Reformer, to which he was greatly urged, and left that honor to the universities, the Dominicans, and Franciscans ; pretending unwillingness to rob them of the glory. In fact, in all essential doctrines, Erasmus was with the reformers ; and saw as clearly the necessity of correcting the abuses which prevailed in the Church of Rome. But he was a man of a studious turn and timid spirit ; and however much his mind inclined to one side, his dread of consequences bent him as much to the other, and kept him suspended between the attracting magnets. Thus, feared by both parties, cordially loved by neither, suspected by all, he obtained not the favour of Rome, but was left to languish in indigence ; and he shared none of the glory of reformation, by meanly shrinking from

the cross. A great man, a good man, an admired man ; but not daring to take a decided part, he remained the victim of his own cautious timidity.

Luther's translation of the Bible had now circulated like the sun, through Germany, and cast a flood of light upon the benighted minds of men. His works were diffused through Christendom. England and the low countries received vast edification from them. They fanned the fires which had been there previously kindled, though kept under by the strong arm of authority and clerical tyranny. The Saxons, and many of their neighbours, had taken the liberty to reform their own abuses. The impious mass was abolished ; the convents evacuated ; and the priests chose a wife, a sister, to live in the holy estate of marriage, instead of unnatural and criminal celibacy. The chief of the reformers set the example, and were quickly followed by the multitude of their brethren.

A host of authors now arose to overwhelm the daring Reformer with their arguments, or their invectives. Among these the eminence of his station has made the King of England most remarkable : gained by the flatteries of the Pope and his own clergy, arrogant in his nature, cruel, a tyrant, and friend to tyranny of every sort, he could bear no resistance to established authority : withal a bigoted Catholic, and only driven by his impetuous and criminal passions to quarrel with the holy see, when in compliance with the Emperor it presumed to thwart his violence and gratifications.

England had happily, since the days of Wickliff, possessed a precious seed that was to the Lord for a generation ; and the records which remain in the registers of the unchristian and cruel bishops of that day, demonstrate the frequent charges of heresy ; the abjuration of some, and the burning of others, afford complete conviction that the light had not been extinct in our Israel. Tenterden, in Kent, is particularly noticed. Even in the days of Richard II. an act of parliament specifies the numerous followers of Wickliff, who preached in many places, *churches, church-yards, and markets, without licence of the ordinary*. A most heretical deed ! These continued to afford continual *matter for broiling*, to the bishops and spiritual courts : and though nothing could extinguish the light in Israel, the faithful few were driven into concealment to avoid the dangers which threatened them on detection, or if but suspected, that they had Wickliff's bible in their houses, and presumed to search the Scriptures daily. Yet multitudes were found approving that great Reformer ; and no sooner were the writings of Luther sent over, than they were read with avidity ; and in London, and in many other places, produced such manifest effects, as to awaken the vigilance and accusations of the sacerdotal tribe, whose craft was in danger ; to rouse the alarm of the spread of heresy ; and to call forth the most vigorous exertions to suppress its progress. The haughty Henry VIII. the ambitious Wolsey, and the whole bench of prelates, united in their determination to consume with fire all opponents of papal supremacy : and the king,

in the abundance of his zeal, undertook himself to write a confutation of Luther's "*Babylonish Captivity*;" with a defence of the Romish Church, and the Catholic Faith. This royal volume, presented with great pomp to Leo, procured for the zealous monarch, the golden perfumed rose of papal benediction; and the great and mighty title of *Defender of the Faith*, in which Henry peculiarly gloried. AN. 1521.

Luther, whose feelings were as keen as his spirit was elevated, looked down upon the puny, popish monarchical champion, and answered him with a contempt and asperity, which many condemned as disrespectful to majesty, but which Luther vindicated. No respect of persons, in controversy, was due to a king more than to another man, who dared to blaspheme the King of kings, and to tarnish the glory of his person and gospel.

AN. 1522. In the midst of this turbid state of the Church, Leo X. departed to give an account of himself to a higher tribunal; and left his successor Adrian VI. to endeavour to compose a contest, which his rashness and imprudence had set on foot.

Adrian had been Charles's tutor, and a man of singular probity. He was favoured by him in the conclave, and raised to the see by his influence. He saw and lamented the disorders of the clergy. He made some feeble attempts to reform them. The disease was too inveterate. Less happy, as he declared, on the papal throne, than in his profes-

sor's chair at Louvain, he bore the load of dignity with reluctance, and quickly devolved the burden on one more suited to the politics of the tiara.

AN. 1523. The diet at Nuremberg was assembled in the absence of the Emperor, to compose the disturbances to which the reformation had given occasion. Adrian sent thither his legate ; but, on his demise, Clement VI. selected a man more congenial with his own spirit, the famous Cardinal Campegio, of whom England has heard so much. He breathed against Luther and his adherents nothing but threatenings and slaughter ; and blamed the tardy lenity of the princes, that had neglected to enforce the decisions of the Diet at Worms. They, on the contrary, presented a long list of their grievances ; and prohibited all changes in ecclesiastical matters, till a general council should be assembled to decide the points in controversy. A general council was a word of odious omen in the ears of the Roman pontiff, and equally dreaded as Luther himself.

It is painful amidst the glories of the rising reformation, to record the disputes which broke out among the reformers themselves, and greatly retarded their progress. AN. 1524. The controversy began between Luther and Carlostadt, about the *manner* in which the body and blood of Christ were to be regarded in the Eucharist. Though Luther had rejected the monstrous doctrine of *transubstantiation*, he supported one little less absurd ; that Christ was in the sacrament after con-

secration, by a *real presence*, as heat in iron when ignited. This has received the name *consubstantiation*. Carlostadt embraced the simpler and more scriptural idea, that the bread and wine were only *signs* and *symbols*; and in this he was cordially supported by the able Zuinglius. The obstinacy of Luther's character is indefensible. He claimed the authority to dictate, which he was himself so averse to allow the Pope. Bitterness of controversy, indeed, ill became such men; nor was the subject of dispute worthy such a contest, which terminated in a schism unhealed unto this day. Let us drop a tear over human infirmity; learn by experience to bear and forbear; and remember always, that the best of men are but men at the best.

Another and most grievous scourge arose collaterally from the spreading light of truth. The peasants, grievously oppressed and enslaved, with emancipation from spiritual bondage received a taste for civil liberty, and detected many gross abuses of the power of their tyrannical nobles. And who can deny that real oppressions were at the bottom of their just complaints? Two famous, or infamous, shall I call them, malcontents, set themselves at the head of the irritated peasants, and for a long while wasted the empire with fire and sword. *Munster* and *Stork* were Anabaptists, and swayed by popular talents the credulous multitude to follow their banners. A battle, in which they were defeated, and their leaders put to death, for a while appeased their troubles which they had



occasioned, though the sect was not suppressed by the executions of their chiefs, but subsists to this day.

Luther, at whose door the Catholics laid every commotion, defended himself victoriously ; and addressed the insurgents to recover them by argument, in vain. The strong arm of power alone could subdue them. Amidst this host of peasants all were not fanatic, nor of ill intentions. Many were deceived by their leaders, and sought only exemptions from burthens too heavy to be borne. As far as religious tenets entered into their views, the abuses of the hierarchy made them covet and profess to seek a purer and more apostolic establishment. But, as in all confusions is the case, when once the barrier of authority is cast down, a deluge of unintended evils rushes in, and desolates the soil which the reformers purposed to improve. Whilst man is the corrupted creature the Scriptures describe him, it is hardly possible but that offences should come ; the woe remains with those who give occasion for them.

AN. 1525. *FREDERIC the Wise*, departing during these commotions, left his brother JOHN, the successor to his dominions, and the head of the Lutheran cause. Frederic had always acted with singular moderation ; and though he protected the fervent Reformer from all his enemies, he did not wholly break with Rome. He hoped by gentle methods to obtain relief from all the miseries complained of, without a schism being made in the

Church. John was of a different mind. Sensible of the pride and unyielding obstinacy of Rome and her pontiffs, he thought, for the honor of the cause, he could not take too decided a part; and therefore, by his own authority, undertook to regulate all ecclesiastical matters within the extent of his jurisdiction. Luther and Melancthon were employed to draw up a code of ecclesiastical directory for Saxony and its dependencies; and the churches were furnished with the most faithful and wise pastors that could be found, in the place of those who had dishonored their sacred profession by their immoralities, or continued to maintain obedience to a foreign potentate. Many of the princes and free cities followed the example of the elector, John; and thus first a complete Lutheran establishment was erected through a considerable part of the empire, and the yoke of Rome broken from their necks.

But neither the Pope, the Emperor, nor the Catholic princes, could look on unconcerned spectators of these dreaded innovations. Temporal interests, as well as religious zeal, roused them to concert the means of preventing the spreading evil. This concert of the Catholics, and their designs, were not hid from the Lutheran abettors; and they resolved on a plan of union and self-defence, if the necessities of the times and the attacks of their enemies should oblige them to repel force by force. Happily the political situation of Charles V. suspended for a while the storm

which was ready to burst ; and each party rested on their arms.

AN. 1526. A diet held at Spires, where Ferdinand, the brother of Charles presided, separated with an agreement that every prince should order ecclesiastical matters in his own dominions as he judged best ; till a general council should be assembled to decide upon the controverted subjects. Than this resolution, nothing could be more favourable to the cause of reformation ; which only asked peace and tolerance to prosper. Another providential circumstance had happened : the fears of the Pope having led him to embrace the interests of Francis I. after the battle of Pavia, and to form a league against the preponderating influence of the Emperor in Italy. On this, Charles became cool in the persecution of the protestants ; besieged and took the Pope prisoner ; and amidst these conflicts of the superior powers, the poor Protestants in Germany had leisure and opportunity to cement their union, and to strengthen themselves against all future opposition. AN. 1527.

But Charles had no sooner carried his designs in Italy into effect, and humbled Clement into submission, than he made a treaty with the pontiff, in which the destruction of the Protestants was designed, and the establishment of the dominion of Charles in Germany, a principal object. To this end, a second Diet was convoked at Spires, where the Emperor caused the former resolutions to be rescinded by a *majority* ; though they had

been before decreed *unanimously* ; and, till a general council should be assembled, he forbad any change to be admitted from the Romish established religion. AN. 1529.

The Elector of Saxony, the Prince of Hesse, and the other Lutheran supporters, nobles and ecclesiastics, perceived the snare that was laid for them. If no alteration was allowed, till sanctioned by a general council, they saw the cause of Lutheranism must be desperate. They, therefore, entered their solemn protest against the resolution of the Diet ; and resolved to maintain the changes they had made. From this protest, they have ever since, with all who rejected the papal government, received the denomination of PROTESTANTS. AN. 1529.

The Protestant princes notified to the Emperor, by their ambassadors, the resolutions which they had adopted : but Charles, by insolently arresting these representatives of their sovereigns, bid them be on their guard against the designs formed against them ; and unite for mutual defence. But alas ! the difference of opinion which prevailed among them, prevented their coming to a decisive resolution. And a conference at Marpurg, to settle these differences between the Protestant divines, especially on the article of the *real presence*, produced no change in the sentiments of the disputants. Œcolampadius and Zuinglius, opposed Luther and Melancthon ; and whilst the former refuted all the charges laid against them, to the

conviction of their opponents, in the grand articles of dispute respecting the Eucharist, there is at this day little doubt on which side the truth was found. But Luther was a man not given to yield. All that could be gained, was, to bear with each other in the points of difference ; and to wait till God, by the word of his truth and spirit, should give them clearer discoveries of his mind in the controverted points.

The Emperor's approach, for a moment, turned all their thoughts to the Diet at Augsburg, which he meant to attend after so long an absence. At an interview with the Pope by the way, he urged the necessity of calling a general council. But that crafty prelate too much dreaded to commit his authority to such an assembly, and under such an Emperor. Clement urged him therefore to execute upon the heretics, deserved vengeance, as became a dutiful son of the Church. The matter, however, did not appear to Charles so easy of accomplishment ; and he relished not the injustice of condemning men unheard : his dissatisfaction, therefore, with the pontiff, was as great as Clement's displeasure at not seeing the fires for burning the heretics already kindled.

Meantime, the Elector of Saxony, to prevent misrepresentations, and to make the Emperor perfectly master of the subject in dispute, enjoined Luther, Melancthon, and other divines, to draw up a clear summary of the Protestant doctrines. This produced the famed CONFESSION OF AUGS-

BURG, ever since appealed to as the standard of protestanism. In awful suspense both parties awaited the result of this assembly, and prepared their forces for the contest, whether of the pen, the tongue, or the sword. AN. 1530.

The reformation had by this time made a wonderful progress on every side.

Denmark and Norway, under one of the greatest monsters who ever swayed a sceptre, had received early the Lutheran doctrine. It happened to be, politically, highly desirable to Christiern II. among other objects, in his way to despotic power, to humble the clergy, who had engrossed the wealth of half the kingdom, and desired to usurp influence over the whole. To sap the foundation of their power, he invited Reinard, a convert of Carlstadt, and afterwards that Reformer himself, to visit him. These laid the foundations of the reformation in Denmark. Advancing with hasty strides under royal patronage, it was alike favoured by his successor ; and in the course of a few years, the final change was accomplished, and popery, root and branch, overturned in the Diet of Odensee, in 1539, under the reign of Christiern III. and in the ministry of the celebrated Bugenhagius, the faithful disciple of Luther.

AN. 1527. The great Gustavus Vasa, who, from the depths of the mines of Dalecarlia, rose to the throne of Sweden by the suffrages of his countrymen, as the just reward of his patriotism : not only rescued their bodies from the tyrannical yoke of

Christiern, but their souls from the more dreadful bondage of popery. During his conflicts with the Danes for liberty, two noble champions, Olaus Petri, and his brother, had set up the standard of truth in Sweden, and all men flocked to it. The German auxiliaries who came to his help, brought also the Lutheran faith, and bibles with them. And as the bitterest enemies of their country, and the partisans of Denmark and Rome were found in the prelatical order, who possessed the chief strength, wealth and power, in the kingdom, after the massacre of Stockholm, it became absolutely necessary to humble their insolence, and clip the wings of their ambition, before the liberties of Sweden could be fixed on a durable basis. Vasa, whose interest exactly coincided with his inclinations, encouraged with all his weight of influence and authority, these zealous reformers ; and, on the settlement of the kingdom, the fabric of popery was utterly demolished, and a purer evangelical establishment fixed, through the labours of Olaus and his colleagues.

Yet in Sweden and Norway they followed a model different in government from the Germanic churches, and preserved the order of bishops and archbishops, though their enormous revenues were abridged, and all their fortified castles and civil power devolved to the crown, the proper possessor of them. In Denmark, the very name of bishop fell with their sees, and *superintendants*, with episcopal privileges, presided in their ecclesiastical councils. That these changes met with violent

opposition, may be supposed. Men who had to defend their dignities, their wealth, besides the prejudices of education, did not easily yield ; and often exposed themselves to violence and oppression. Great alterations are seldom or ever brought about without very blameable acts of authority in the ruling party. Let no man vindicate abuses in the cause of protestantism, whilst he pleads against them in the hand of popery.

AN. 1539. The great master of the Teutonic order, the ancestor of the present kings of Prussia, following the example of Luther and the reformers, took to himself a wife, and set up the Lutheran profession through Prussia, Magdeburg, and the dominions which he possessed in the North.

Nor could France avoid the infection. Even at court, many of the nobility espoused the new doctrines, and a vast multitude embraced the Protestant faith, notwithstanding the bitter enmity which Francis I. is said to have expressed against it, and which always rankled in his heart. His political interests compelling him to unite sometimes with the protestant princes in Germany, they engaged him to a momentary reluctant toleration of their brethren in France. But his connections with the Pope, and his own inclinations, oftener led him to indulge his bigotry, in committing the Protestants to the flames, and suppressing the profession of the Gospel, by the most atrocious acts of cruelty and oppression. It was to escape the sword of this persecutor, that the famed Calvin, a name



never to be mentioned by a Protestant but with reverence, fled to Basil, where he published that noble defence of the evangelical doctrine, in a treatise, called *Christian Institutes*, dedicated to his persecutor, and admired for its latinity, as well as force of argument.

Calvin was a native of Picardy ; he was intended for the church ; but, in compliance with his father's wishes, applied himself to the law. The reigning controversies early engaged his attention. He read the Scriptures with the greatest solemnity and diligence, and no sooner examined, than he embraced the doctrines of truth ; which he adorned by a conversation the most exemplary, and promoted with an eloquence that charmed the ear, whilst it carried conviction to the heart. Through his labours, as well as those of Beza and others, famous in their day, men of renown, the cause daily triumphed in Geneva and through Switzerland ; and threatened the downfall of the anti-christian power in the South, as it had already fallen in the North. Nor could any thing have prevented a complete revolution, but the united force of regal and papal powers, suppressing, by every atrocity, the spirit of enquiry ; and executing on the most zealous professors, every torment diabolical cruelty could invent. Without this, the reign of popery had then fallen, and not awaited its overthrow to the present day.

Spain, the most ignorant, bigoted, and servile to the Roman see, was penetrated by the light of

truth, in spite of all the fires of inquisitors, and their watchfulness to suppress the first approaches of what Rome called heresy. It even passed the mountains, and spread into many parts of Italy, the very seat of **THE BEAST**.

In Switzerland it triumphed in many cantons. It entered Hungary, Transylvania, Poland ; and every where produced a plenteous harvest, amidst the bitterest persecutions from the ruling powers, and the bloody bishops, whose ecclesiastical courts were crowded with prosecutions, and their prisons filled with confessors. The enemies of truth and godliness pretended not to confine themselves to the Bible, or arguments which they found to be impotent ; but every where had recourse to torments, racks, and gibbets ; the only effectual syllogisms with which they could answer the reformers, and check the course of what they called heresy. The Church of Rome tottered from its foundation. Nothing but the strong arm of power, and the interest which the rich and proud had in maintaining its usurpations, propped up the trembling fabric for a while longer ; till the appointed time should arrive for its final overthrow. For a space, the deadly wound was healed by the kings of the earth, under the papal hierarchy, giving their power to the beast, and suppressing by the violence of persecution, the rising flame of reformation : but the day we hope is approaching for its fall, never to rise again.

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION, AND  
THE UNION OF SENTIMENT AMONG THE RE-  
FORMERS.

**I**T has been often supposed and suggested, that the reformers themselves were at variance on the most important doctrines of the Gospel; and, that Luther and Calvin differed greatly in the fundamental articles of their creed: whereas, except in the matter of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, all the eminent men among the reformers of that day, concurred in the same fundamental truths:

1. Of *God's eternal purpose* and *predestination of an elect people*, and those comparatively few, ordained to life and glory eternal.

2. That man had lost all *ability to do good*, and *freedom of will* to choose it: and was in his nature as fallen, inclined only to evil.

3. That nothing ever did or can alter this propensity of the human heart, but the Holy Ghost by his own immediate agency upon the souls of men.

4. That a sinner is, and can be *justified by faith only*; and this not of himself; being unable, either to comprehend or receive the things that be of the

Spirit of God ; and therefore, *the faith* itself must be *the gift of God*.

5. That *merit* in creature there is none, nor ever can be. From first to last a sinner must be saved by grace.

6. That the vicarious atonement by the one oblation of Christ upon the cross, is effectual, not for the many called, but for the few chosen.

These things were what the reformers uniformly held ; as is evident in the conferences at Marpurg, between Luther and Zuinglius, Melancthon and Œcolampadius. And nothing in the institutes of Calvin speaks a stronger language, than the answer of Luther to Erasmus, entitled *DE SERVO ARBITRIO*. I shall produce only one paragraph from it, demonstrative of the *one faith*, universally confessed in all the first Protestant churches. It is among our deepest miseries, and the proof of our sad declensions, that we, of latter times, have departed from “ the faith once delivered unto the saints ; ” revived in *that day* in all its primitive glory : and thanks be to God, after long obscurity, again rising in its brightness in the present generation. May its great Revealer manifest his own Almighty influence, and cause the word of truth to run and have free course, and be glorified throughout the world.

Erasmus had attacked Luther on the doctrines of predestination and grace ; and according to the present cant of objectors, he urged, “ What can “ be more useless, than to publish this paradox to

“ the world ? namely, That whatever we do is  
“ done not by *virtue of our own free will*, but in  
“ a way of necessity, &c. What a wide gap does  
“ the publication of this tenet open among men,  
“ for the commission of all ungodliness ? What  
“ wicked person will reform his life ? Who will  
“ dare to believe himself a favourite of Heaven ?  
“ Who will fight against his own corrupt inclina-  
“ tions ? Therefore, where is either the need or  
“ the utility of spreading these notions, from  
“ whence so many evils seem to flow ?”

To this Luther triumphantly replies, “ If, my  
“ Erasmus, you consider these paradoxes (as you  
“ term them) to be no more than the inventions of  
“ men, why are you so extraordinarily heated on  
“ the occasion ? In that case your arguments af-  
“ fect not *me* ; for there is no person now living  
“ in the world, who is a more avowed enemy  
“ to the doctrines of men than myself. But, if  
“ you believe the doctrines in debate between us,  
“ to be (as indeed they are) the doctrines of God,  
“ you must have bid adieu to all sense of shame  
“ and decency, thus to oppose them. I will not  
“ ask, whether is the *modesty* of Erasmus fled ? But,  
“ which is much more important, where alas ! are  
“ your fear and reverence of the Deity, when you  
“ roundly declare, that this branch of truth,  
“ which he has revealed from Heaven, is at best  
“ *useless*, and unnecessary to be known ? What !  
“ shall the glorious Creator be taught by you his  
“ creature, what is fit to be preached, and what to  
“ be suppressed ? Is the adorable God so very

“ defective in wisdom and prudence, as not to  
“ know, till you instruct him, what would be  
“ *useful* and what pernicious ? Or could not *He*,  
“ whose understanding is infinite, foresee, previous  
“ to his revelation of this doctrine, what would  
“ be the consequences of his revealing it, till those  
“ consequences were pointed out by *you* ? You  
“ cannot, you dare not say this. If then it was  
“ the divine pleasure to make known these things  
“ in his word, and to bid his messengers publish  
“ them abroad, and to leave the consequences of  
“ their so doing to the wisdom and providence of  
“ him in whose name they speak, and whose mes-  
“ sage they declare ; who art thou, O Erasmus,  
“ that thou shouldest reply against God, and say  
“ to the Almighty, what doest thou ? St. Paul,  
“ discoursing of God, declareth peremptorily,  
“ *whom he will he hardeneth* : and again, *God wil-*  
“ *ling to shew his wrath*, &c. And the Apostle  
“ did not write this to have it stifled among a few  
“ persons, and buried in a corner ; but wrote it to  
“ the Christians at Rome ; which was, in effect,  
“ bringing this doctrine upon the stage of the whole  
“ world ; stamping an universal *imprimatur* upon  
“ it ; and publishing it to believers at large through-  
“ out the earth. What can sound harsher in the  
“ uncircumcised ears of carnal men, than those  
“ words of Christ, *many are called but few are cho-*  
“ *sen* ? and elsewhere, *I know whom I have chosen*.  
“ Now these, and similar assertions of Christ and  
“ his Apostles, are the very positions which you,  
“ O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurtful. You  
“ object, if these things are so, who will amend

“his life? I answer, without the Holy Ghost  
“no man *can* amend his life to purpose. Refor-  
“mation is but varnished hypocrisy, unless it  
“proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious  
“are amended by the Spirit of God : and those of  
“mankind, who are not amended by *him*, will  
“perish. You ask, moreover, who will dare to  
“believe himself a favourite of Heaven? I answer,  
“it is not in a man’s own power to believe himself  
“such, upon just grounds, till he is enabled from  
“above. But the elect shall be so enabled : they  
“shall be enabled to believe themselves to be what  
“indeed they are. As for the rest, who are not  
“endued with faith, they shall perish ; raging and  
“blaspheming, as you do now. But, say you,  
“these doctrines open a door to ungodliness? I  
“answer, whatever door they may open to the im-  
“pious and profane, yet they open a door of right-  
“eousness to the elect and holy, and shew them the  
“way to Heaven, and the path of access unto God.  
“Yet you would have us abstain from the mention  
“of these grand doctrines, and leave our people in  
“the dark, as to their election of God. The con-  
“sequence of which would be, that every man  
“would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of  
“a share in that salvation, which is supposed to lie  
“open to all ; and thus genuine humility, and the  
“practical fear of God, would be kicked out of  
“doors. This would be a pretty way indeed of  
“stopping up the gap Erasmus complains of!  
“Instead of closing up the door of licentiousness,  
“as is falsely pretended : it would be in fact open-  
“ing a gulph into the nethermost hell. Still you

“urge, where is either the necessity or utility of  
“preaching predestination? God himself teaches it,  
“and commands *us* to teach it : and that is answer  
“enough. We are not to arraign the Deity, and  
“bring the motives of his will to the test of human  
“scrutiny, but simply to revere both him and it.  
“He, who alone is all-wise and all-just, can in  
“reality (however things appear to us) do wrong  
“to no man ; neither can he do any thing unwise-  
“ly or rashly. And this consideration will suffice  
“to silence all the objections of truly religious per-  
“sons. However, let us for argument’s sake, go  
“a step farther. I will venture to assign over and  
“above two very important reasons why these doc-  
“trines should be publicly taught : 1st. For the  
“humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation  
“of divine grace. God hath assuredly promised  
“his favours to the truly humble. By the *truly*  
“*humble*, I mean those who are endued with re-  
“pentance, and despair of saving themselves : for  
“a man can never be said to be truly penitent and  
“humble, until he is made to know that his salva-  
“tion is not suspended in any measure whatever,  
“on his own strength, machinations, endeavours,  
“free-will, or works : but entirely depends on the  
“free pleasure, purpose, determination, and effi-  
“ciency of another, even of God alone. Whilst a  
“man is persuaded that he has it in his own power  
“to contribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his  
“own salvation ; he remains in carnal confidence ;  
“he is not a self-despairer, and, therefore, he is  
“not duly humbled before God ; so far from it,  
“that he hopes some favourable juncture or op-



“ portunity will offer, when he may be able to  
“ lend an helping hand to the business of his  
“ salvation. On the contrary, whoever is truly  
“ convinced that the whole work depends singly  
“ and absolutely on the will of God, who alone  
“ is the author and finisher of salvation, such a  
“ person despairs of self-assistance ; he renounces  
“ his own will and his own strength : he waits  
“ and prays for the operation of God—nor waits  
“ and prays in vain. For the elect’s sake, there-  
“ fore, these doctrines are to be preached : That  
“ the chosen of God being humbled by the  
“ knowledge of his truths ; self-emptied and sunk  
“ into nothing, as it were, in his presence, may be  
“ saved in Christ with eternal glory. This then  
“ is one inducement to the publication of the doc-  
“ trine ; that the penitent may be made acquainted  
“ with the promise of grace, and plead it in prayer  
“ to God, and receive it as their own. 2d. The  
“ nature of the Christian faith requires it. Faith  
“ has to do with things not seen. And this is one  
“ of the highest degrees of faith, stedfastly to be-  
“ lieve that God is infinitely merciful, though he  
“ saves (comparatively) but few, and condemns  
“ so many ; and that he is strictly just, though of  
“ his own will he makes such numbers of mankind  
“ necessarily liable to damnation. Now these are  
“ some of the unseen things whereof faith is the  
“ evidence. Whereas, was it in my power to com-  
“ prehend them, or clearly to make out *how* God  
“ is both inviolably just, and infinitely merciful,

“ notwithstanding the display of wrath, and seem-  
“ ing inequality in his dispensations, respecting  
“ the reprobate, faith would have little or nothing  
“ to do. But now, since these matters cannot be  
“ adequately comprehended by us, in our present  
“ state of imperfection, there is room for the ex-  
“ ercise of faith. The truths, therefore, respect-  
“ ing predestination in all its branches, should be  
“ taught and published. They, no less than the  
“ other mysteries of Christian doctrine, being  
“ proper objects of faith, on the part of God’s  
“ people.”

As I have been charmed myself with the plain-  
ness and simplicity of this testimony of Luther, I  
have produced it, as the most conclusive proof of  
the sentiments of this great Reformer. I wish it  
seriously to be considered ; and I appeal to every  
man of common sense, whether any thing can be  
more explicit, or words less equivocal. Indeed, I  
am ever amazed, that any man of learning, not to  
say common sense, can, after such plain declara-  
tions, dispute what was the opinion of the reform-  
ers in the Augsburg Confession, the Helvetic, or  
the English. That persons may dispute the  
truths which these contain, may be allowed, and  
welcome. No man is constrained to believe  
any human articles of faith ; but to dispute the  
meaning of the reformers in these articles is utterly  
disingenuous, and unbecoming literary men, who  
have read the history of the times, or the works  
of the reformers. I will readily admit, that the  
doctrines of the reformation have very much gone

out of vogue, in all the protestant churches as well as our own ; but that does not at all alter the case, or give us a liberty to put a meaning upon their articles of faith, the very reverse of what they intended to convey. But, *surdo narras fabulam.*

## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG, TO THE RELIGIOUS  
PEACE IN THE SAME CITY.

**I**N awful suspense, the contending parties awaited the issue of the diet at Augsburg, (AN. 1530) but very differently were they affected. A slight sketch of their situation, may be as amusing as instructive.

CLEMENT, the Pope, dreaded a general council, to defeat which all his arts were to be employed. He wished not to compromise the dignity of *his see*, which, having set itself above all control, would not stoop to be limited by any superiority which these assemblies claimed, and of which the councils of Constance and Basil had given him fearful examples : but he had a sensibility peculiarly his own, as he was a bastard, and might therefore justly be impeached and degraded, as an intruder into the vicegerency of Christ, according to the canons.

The EMPEROR wished a general council, the deliberations of which he hoped to control ; but he had also a variety of particular views. He wanted the assistance of the Protestant as well as Catholic electors, to defend the empire, and particularly his hereditary dominions, which were

most exposed, against the victorious Ottomans, who had lately besieged his capital of Vienna, and, though defeated, he dreaded their return. But he had an object still more at heart, to establish in Germany his power as despotically as in his hereditary dominions; and to subdue both Catholics and Protestants to himself, which could only be done by deceiving both, and making one the instrument of weakening the other.

The CATHOLIC PRINCES abhorred the reformation, and, zealously attached to the superstitions of Rome, wished to prevent all admission of the Lutheran tenets into their territories, and to reduce the Lutheran princes, by force of arms, under the Roman yoke which they had broken.

The PROTESTANTS, not well united among themselves; saw all their danger, and endeavoured to avert the storm which they perceived gathering around them. They resolved to maintain the steps they had taken, and to advance the work of reformation which they had begun. But they were, in Germany, as yet, the weaker party, and in great danger of being crushed by the weight of the Emperor and the Catholic princes. Their interest, therefore, was evidently to gain time; and by reference of the matters in dispute to a general council, not likely to be held in the present state of the contending parties, to gather strength for the conflicts which threatened them.

With these several views they all assembled at Augsburg; and the Emperor opened the diet, when

the Augsburg Confession was read by Bayer to the Emperor and Princes, and heard with profound attention. A similar profession of faith was received from the cities of Straßburg, Constance, Meningen, and Lindau, drawn up by Bucer; a noble defence of the Protestant doctrines.

The Catholics, with the envenomed Eckius at their head, assisted by Faber and Cochlæus, produced a refutation of the Protestant confession: and the Emperor and Catholic Princes, with the Pope's legate, demanded the submission of the Protestants to their doughty champion's arguments. But as these carried not the least conviction to their antagonists, they requested a copy of this pretended refutation, that they might answer it. This was denied; their obedience to Rome was peremptorily enjoined, and silence imposed on them for the future. Such proceedings necessarily increased their opposition. They presented to Charles a reply to Eckius and his colleagues, which he objected to receive. The Protestants had, therefore, to defend themselves by force, or submit to the oppression.

When Charles found them resolute, he hesitated to drive matters to extremities; and an attempt was made by conferences between the opponents, to see if no temperament conciliatory could be found. Melancthon, too conceding, would have gone great lengths to prevent a rupture, but dared not yield the great truths of God; whilst the Papists urged their party to insist on terms in-

possible to be complied with. These were accordingly rejected. The Hessian and Saxon Princes withdrew. The Emperor dictated the decree, suppressing the changes which had been made in religion ; and commanded all men to return to the papal obedience, at the peril of his imperial wrath ; in the execution of which, the Catholic Princes and their party, engaged to support the Emperor with all their forces.

AN. 1531. The Protestant Princes now stood upon their defence, and seeing remonstrance in vain, met at Smalkald, and formed a solemn league for the support of their liberties, in which they earnestly invited all those to unite, who had cast off the tyranny of Rome, and wished to preserve their brethren from being compelled to return to the house of their prison. Luther was averse to the way of arms ; but the necessity of the case compelled his consent ; though the bigotry of his spirit excluded Switzerland and the cities, which had presented their confession of faith by Bucer, from the league.

The electors of the Palatinate and Mentz, dreaded the approaching rupture, which now seemed inevitable in the Germanic body ; and endeavoured to reconcile the parties, or at least to suspend the fatal blow. And such was the Emperor's situation, that he was compelled to lend a reluctant ear to the proposal of withdrawing his decrees. The Turks threatened Germany, and the Protestants refused all assistance, till the edicts of Worms and

Augsburg were recalled. Nor would they ratify the succession of his brother Ferdinand to the imperial throne, notwithstanding his majority of votes, but on this condition. Necessity bends the most obstinate politician. Charles, to carry these two points, was obliged to yield, and leave the Lutherans to themselves, till the promised council should assemble to settle the differences in religion. AN. 1552.

The great support of the Protestant cause, the faithful Saxon, soon after departed, and left his electorate to his son and successor, John Frederic, equally zealous with his father, but born for adversity. The peace obtained was highly advantageous to the cause of Lutheranism, which many states now openly avowed, who had been before restrained by apprehensions of the imperial decrees. And Clement, though urged by the Emperor, still temporising, contrived to keep off by evasions, the assembling a general council, which he so much dreaded ; and died before any place could be fixed upon agreeable to the several parties. AN. 1534.

During this interval of suspense, events had happened of the most important kind.

HENRY VIII. after a long solicitation at Rome for a sentence of divorce from his Queen Catherine, in order to marry Anne Bulleyn, wearied with the tricks of the legate Campegio, and the duplicity of the Pope, to the great joy of the Protestants, threw off the papal authority altogether. The Pope had solemnly promised the King of France,



that if Henry would send his submissions to the holy see, he would sanction the divorce ; especially as all the universities had concurred in their suffrage of the unlawfulness of the king's marriage with his brother's widow. But as she was the near relation of the Emperor, and her cause warmly espoused by him, the Pope, who dreaded the Emperor's resentment, and had promised him to support the Queen, was in the most unhappy dilemma. CLEMENT cared neither about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the marriage, and had as little thought about religion in the matter, as the King, of conscience, notwithstanding all his pretended scruples. Impatient at the delays, and irritated with the repeated deceptions practised upon him by the legates, sent to protract the affair, HENRY threatened to withdraw himself and kingdom totally from the papal jurisdiction. CLEMENT would fain have still temporised, and kept the matter in abeyance ; but pushed hard by the imperialists, he pronounced the fatal sentence of the validity of the marriage, with the dire threats of anathemas, if the King was refractory. Two days after, the King's submission, which Clement had required, reached Rome. It had happily arrived too late. The Pope dared not retract, for fear of the Emperor ; and Henry was a man of too violent a temper to be thus insulted. He withdrew himself, therefore, and his kingdom, wholly from the papal dominion ; and to the great joy of his subjects, especially the favourers of reformation, cut off all intercourse with Rome ; which his parliament con-

firmed ; and conferred on their monarch the supremacy in Church as well as State. But it must not be imagined that HENRY became a Protestant, by ceasing to be a Papist. No, he was exactly the same unprincipled tyrannical despot as before, and as disposed to persecute Protestant as Papist, who dared to swerve a hair from his decisions.

AN. 1533. A King of a different sort, JOHN of Leyden, figured upon the theatre in Germany. He was a taylor by trade ; and setting himself at the head of a fanatic multitude, seized on the city of Munster, where he erected what his deluded followers called the NEW JERUSALEM, over which he presided. But this newly erected throne, established in blood and tumult, was of short duration ; and ended in the capture and execution of the monarch and his ministers ; and the dispersion of the rabble which followed him. They were of the Anabaptist sect ; at that time remarkable for turbulence, though since subsided into a more peaceable spirit.

The EMPEROR, finding his efforts to obtain a general council, which would be at all satisfactory to the German princes, constantly thwarted by the crafty pontiffs, resolved to attempt settling matters himself in a diet. For this end, he ordered a conference at Worms, between Melancthon and Eckius, for several days ; but the disputants appeared as far from each other as ever ; and, when assembled afterwards, at the diet which met at Ratisbon, no final decision could be concluded. The Pope, by

his legate, proposed Trent for the place of assembling the council. The Protestant Princes objected to the place, as well as to the papal claim of summoning the persons who should constitute that body, which, they complained, must in that case be partial ; but as the Emperor and Catholic Princes consented, the letters of convocation were issued. The Protestants refused to submit ; and Charles, who had now supposed himself able, determined to compel them. Both sides prepared for battle. Amidst the din of preparations, the great Reformer, Luther, closed his eyes ; deploring the miseries he feared, and exhorting to prayer, patience, and mutual forbearance, as the choicest weapons of our warfare. AN. 1546.

He was, indeed, taken away from the evil to come. The council of Trent assembled. The Protestants disclaimed their authority. The Emperor prepared to enforce their decrees by arms. The Saxon Elector, and the Prince of Hesse, boldly prevented him ; and penetrating into Bavaria, were ready to force the Emperor in his camp at Ingolstadt ; when the treacherous Maurice, the nephew of the Elector, debauched by the promise of the Electorate, and yielding to the cravings of criminal ambition, fell upon Saxony, and compelled John to retire from Bavaria, in order to defend his own dominions. Pursued and surrounded in his retreat ; deserted by a considerable part of his army ; and compelled to fight at disadvantage ; he lost the battle of Muhlberg and his liberty together. And Philip of Hesse, his coadjutor, persuaded by

his son-in-law, Maurice, to cast himself upon the Emperor's clemency, with promises of favour and preservation of his estates, was detained prisoner, in breach of the most solemn engagement ; it is said, by the subterfuge of a German word inserted in the agreement—which would, if true, have only added the greatest meanness to the most perfidious conduct. AN. 1547:

The Protestant cause, now, to human view, appeared desperate. The Emperor, with an army, overawed the diet. Maurice, gained by the Emperor, with the Protestant leaders, consented to submit to the decisions of Trent ; what *they* would be, it was impossible to doubt. But equally vain are counsel and might against the Lord. He can take the proud in their own devices, and disappoint their purposes by the very means planned for their accomplishment.

The plague breaking out at Trent, a few fathers went to Bologna, and the rest dispersed ; nor could all the remonstrances of the Emperor engage the Pope to bring them back again. Vexed to the heart at these tricks of papal management, Charles resolved to mortify the pontiff, by shewing him that he could act without him. He caused, therefore, a *formulary* to be drawn up, such as he hoped might be acceptable to both parties, because the expressions were so ambiguous, as that each might give it their own interpretation ; adding some concessions to the Protestants, respecting the sacrament in both kinds, and the marriage of the clergy.

Hereupon he called a diet, read the decrees which he had ordered to be prepared, and without any suffrage of the Princes, enacted this as the rule, till a general council should otherwise direct. Hence this decree received the name of the *INTERIM*, as it was merely designed to be a temporary expedient.

AN. 1548. As is often the case, what was intended to satisfy both parties pleased neither. The *Papists* exclaimed against the authority assumed without the Pope; the *Protestants* complained, that all the essentials of popery were left in full force.

The politic Maurice saw through the designs of Charles, and his intention of erecting his sovereignty, on the humiliation of the princes. He was glad of an opportunity of redeeming his credit with the Protestant powers, among whom he still in profession numbered himself; and he was particularly provoked by the imprisonment of his father-in-law, the Prince of Hesse, whom he had unintentionally betrayed, and whom Charles refused to release. When, therefore, on the death of CLEMENT, and the succession of JULIUS, Charles had prevailed on the new pontiff to re-assemble the council at Trent; and with his army compelled the diet, held at Augsburg, to engage themselves implicitly to obey their decrees, Maurice dared to qualify his consent with conditions, judged, so derogatory to the papal authority, that the Archbishop of Mentz refused to enter them on the register of the diet.

Meantime, the Protestants, at the close of the diet, commenced their preparations for whatever might happen. The brave reformers, with Melancton and Bredtius at their head, drew up their confessions of faith to be presented to the council; and Maurice, who merely meant to amuse the Emperor by apparent submission, prepared for effectually resisting his ambitious projects. For Charles was no more Catholic, than it is to be feared Maurice was Protestant; but intended, in the council, which he supposed his present untroubled power could direct, not merely to humble the princes of the empire, and the Protestants especially, whom he most feared, but also to set such limits to the papal jurisdiction, as would prevent the Pope from interfering with, or interrupting his schemes for securing the same despotic power in Germany and Italy, after which he aspired, as in his own hereditary dominions.

In the midst of his imaginary triumph, and self-confident security, the Emperor was surprised at Inspruck, with the sudden approach of a mighty army under Maurice; who had secretly leagued with him many German princes, and the King of France; and rushed upon the unsuspecting monarch. As he had no equal army to oppose, and was himself in danger of being taken prisoner, he was glad to obtain his safety by the PACIFICATION OF PASSAU, AN. 1552; containing a solemn grant of perfect liberty to the princes, and the Protestant cause. The INTERIM was revoked; all edicts against the Lutherans annulled; the prisoners set

at liberty ; and all who had suffered for the league of Smalkald, re-instated in their honors and possessions ; and a certain number of Lutherans admitted into the council chamber of Spires, where justice impartial should be henceforth ministered to Protestants as to Catholics.

Thus the very man on whom Charles had depended for the entire subversion of the Lutheran cause, became its firmest bulwark, and established it upon a basis which could no more be overturned.

A diet was to be held to confirm all these concessions. After various delays, it assembled at Augsburg ; and there, after long deliberations, the equitable conditions were adjusted, which received the name of THE RELIGIOUS PEACE, AN. 1555. The Protestants were discharged from all papal jurisdiction. The states and free cities were to be unmolested, in whatever ecclesiastical establishment they chose to form—animosities were to cease—no persecutions to be admitted on account of religious opinions—and, whoever attempted to violate any of these articles, was to be treated as a disturber of the public peace. Oh that men might always be as reasonable, peaceable, and tolerant !

It is a singular event, and supported by strong authority, that this enemy of the Protestants, who had repeatedly brought their cause to the very verge of ruin, is supposed to have died in the faith he so long persecuted. Wearied with royalty, and the toils which had worn him down, Charles V.

wished to end his days in holy retirement. He resigned his hereditary dominions of Spain and the Netherlands, to his son Philip, and procured the empire for his brother Ferdinand. He had thoroughly been conversant with the subjects in dispute, and in the silence of solitude, the absence of tumultuous engagements, and the approach of death, the solemn reflections upon these important truths, which he had so often heard debated, led him to different apprehensions respecting them, from those he had before entertained. His dearest friends, and the companions of his retirement, were seized by the inquisitors, the moment their royal master closed his eyes. His preacher, his confessor, his favoured bishop of Tortola, with many others of inferior distinction, or domestics, expired in flames or torture, the victims of that bloody tribunal, and of the cruel Philip, the unworthy son and successor of this mighty monarch. The vengeance they were prevented from inflicting on the master, fell on his peculiar favourites, and spoke the cause of offence.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE PROGRESS OF REFORMATION.

**T**HE hope with which Henry the Eighth had inspired the Protestants, was greatly disappointed. He had separated from the Pope, but not from popery. And though the excellent Cranmer enjoyed his favour, and was supported by him against his many enemies, the cause of truth dared not lift up its head. The iron rod of power held down every bold spirit which presumed to dispute the king's supremacy, or infallibility, just as the Pope's before. It is painful to record the tragedies performed by the malignant Gardiner and Bonner, whose compliance with the King's caprices, still left them power to persecute to death, those who presumed to advance farther in reformation than his pleasure allowed. Even Cranmer often held a precarious existence. Yet the authority of the clergy was greatly reduced ; and the translation of the Bible, by Tyndal, afterwards a noble martyr, contributed to open men's eyes. Having fled his country to escape persecution, he finished and published his work at Antwerp, and thence dispersed the copies in England ; which wonderfully spread the light of truth. The number of ministers and people, who, through the writings of the reformers, had embraced the evangelical doctrines,

was great ; and some of them, as the excellent Bilney, by whom Latimer was converted, with Frith, and other worthies, fell victims to episcopal persecution, and died in flames.

AN. 1546. Happily the death of this inhuman and capricious monarch opened a more pleasing prospect. Edward VI. his son, though very young, had drank deeply into the principles of the reformation, under the tuition of the faithful Cranmer, who, during his reign, chiefly guided ecclesiastical matters, and filled the sees with men of singular zeal and piety, as Ridley, Latimer, and others. The motley mixture of the former reign now gave place to a more perfect reform ; and became nearly such as the Church of England still professes. But the prelates, who had maintained their attachment to Rome under the former sovereign, and conformed with reluctance to the changes since established, waited impatiently for a return of the old religion, as Edward's feeble health declined, and promised a speedy demise. A short reign of felicity to the Protestant cause, was succeeded by the accession of the bloody Mary, with her popish advisers. Yet had the cause of truth so firmly fixed itself in the land, that all the fires kindled in Smithfield, at Oxford, or elsewhere, were unable to consume the seed of the faithful ; though they destroyed many great and eminent individuals. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, were consigned to the flames ; but their blood produced a plenteous increase.

AN. 1553. MARY was a bigot, and dupe to the popish party. She thought to avenge her mother's quarrels, by sacrificing every Protestant to her resentment; but the reformation had taken such root as not to be eradicated. Though the chief men in church and state were generally swayed by their interests to to embrace the courtly religion, a noble army of martyrs, bishops, priests, and laymen, chose rather to die for Christ, than commit idolatry, and countenance superstition. Happily for the nation, though the mischief done in a short time was abundant, God put a period to Mary's bloody reign, and the crown devolved on Elizabeth, the daughter of the unhappy Boleyn. She inherited a portion of her mother's goodness and protestanism, though mixed with a greater measure of her father's despotism. AN. 1558.

IRELAND, which had long been as the satellite of the superior planet, and followed her revolutions, had shared in all the struggles and all the blessings of the reformation. Under Edward, and the excellent Archbishop of Dublin, Brown, the Protestant cause had completely gained the ascendant; though the wildness of the country left the provinces distant from the capital, over-run with popery, as they are to this day. On Mary's accession, the fire of persecution began to kindle; but nearer concerns at home cast the affairs of Ireland into the back ground. At last a zealous Romanist, a Dr. COLE, was dispatched with a full commission, like Paul, the persecutor, going to Damascus, to spread slaughter over the devoted Protestants. On

his journey, being waited upon by the Mayor of Chester, he could not withhold boasting of the charge committed to him, and producing from his baggage a roll; "This," said he, "shall lash the heretics of Ireland into obedience." The good woman of the house where he lodged, heard and trembled; but acute in her wits, as zealous in the cause, she resolved to play the Doctor a trick, and as he attended the Mayor to the door, and left his boasted roll upon the table, she whipped it up, and instead of the commission, she put into its place a pack of cards wrapped like it, with the knave of clubs facing the back. The Doctor, as soon as the packet was ready for sailing, passed into Ireland; and in all the pomp of an inquisitor, appeared before the lord lieutenant and privy council at the Castle, ready to enter on his office. The secretary being called upon to open and read his commission, he was as much surprised as the Doctor was confounded, to find nothing but a pack of cards, and the knave of clubs facing him. The ridicule of the scene may be easily imagined. The lord lieutenant and privy council could not authorise any proceedings without a new commission; and desiring the Doctor to return to England, and hasten back, he jocularly said, that in the interim he would shuffle the cards. But before the business was dispatched, the Queen departed to give an account of herself to God, and the Doctor was left with the knave of clubs.

SCOTLAND could not fail imbibing the spreading contagion. The Scotch, always warlike, and men of

acute minds, had many of them returned from the foreign countries, where the reformation had been introduced, and brought to their native land the books and tenets of the reformers. Long had the truth struggled against the power and craft of popish tyranny ; and many a martyr, and many a confessor consented to go to prison and to death, rather than abjure the faith once delivered unto the saints. No monarch had yet attempted to break the yoke, and the priesthood were triumphant, till the intrepid Knox arose, rude as the bleak climate which gave him birth, A.D. 1559. Having formed with Calvin at Geneva, the strictest friendship, and adopted all his opinions respecting church government, he returned to his native land ; and, with his rough eloquence, and hardihood that knew no fear, he bore down all opposition, overturned the whole popish hierarchy, and established the Presbyterian government in its stead, to which the Church of Scotland still adheres.

The BELGIC PROVINCES being nearer the scene of action, early received the light of gospel reformation ; and none suffered more severely for their adherence to the faith, than that afflicted country. The obdurate bigot, Philip, resolved to extirpate all who refused subjection to Rome. The bloody inquisition was set up in the provinces ; and the more cruel duke of Alva, his general, poured out the Protestant blood as water on every side. Revolt against this oppressive dominion, rent the provinces in twain. A part defied their enemies ; and, in a war, of which we have few examples,

maintained their liberties, and triumphed at last over their persecutors. The Dutch republic, under the famous William of Orange, stood as high in majesty against the humbled Spaniard, as they were distinguished for the purity of their religious faith and practice. *Heu quantum mutatus ab illo !* The present change is as degrading to the country as afflictive to the mind of every true Protestant. May a phoenix rise from the ashes, and her youth be renewed as the eagle's.

SPAIN, and the Spanish dominions in Italy, had received the beam of reformation. The very doctors brought by Charles V. to combat Luther, caught the fire from his lips, and carried back to their country the heresy they came to subdue. But there, the bigoted monarchs and superstitious clergy, fiercely set all their engines at work to suppress the hated innovations ; and, after torrents of bloodshed, by martyrs innumerable—tortures, racks and gibbets, prevailed to extinguish the flame. The light of truth was quite put out, and obscure darkness has there reigned ever since, with debasing superstition beyond that of any other country. I include Portugal, where the same steps, under the same monarch, produced the same miserable effects, to the utter subversion of all gospel grace and truth.

The Spanish dominions in Italy shared nearly the same fate ; and, though Naples would not admit the inquisition, the persecution of the reformers was equally inveterate. The brave Ochino, and the excellent Peter Martyr, exerted their zeal and eloquence, not quite in vain, but without being

able to effect a national change. Compelled to fly for their lives, they took refuge in foreign lands, and watered the garden of strangers with the dew of that heavenly wisdom which their deluded countrymen prevented from dropping on themselves.

Through all regions under papal jurisdiction, every effort of craft and cruelty was employed ; and from the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, the name of Protestant exterminated.

Thus stood the account, at last, between Protestants and Papists in Europe. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brandenburg, Prussia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, all Protestant governments. Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Belgic provinces, under the Spanish yoke, all papal. Germany, with its vast dependencies divided, and nearly poised in interest between both, every state having a mixture of its opponents ; in some tolerated, in others persecuted. Switzerland divided, but the preponderating weight, and greater numbers, Protestants ; and France, more than once on the equilibrium, ready to change its dominant religion ; and at last returning to the house of bondage, though with millions of its inhabitants firm in the Protestant faith.

The numbers were still on the side of the Catholics, and their union under one visible head, greatly in their favour, politically speaking ; whilst the Protestants quickly separated into two great bodies, besides other sub-divisions, at the heads of which were Luther and Melancthon on the one

hand, of the *Augsburg Confession*; and on the other, of the *Helvetic Confession*, were Æcolampadius and Calvin. These also were pretty nearly balanced. In the north Lutheranism generally prevailed. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the far larger part of the German empire, followed the Augsburg Confession; whilst the British islands, Holland, Switzerland, Geneva, France, and many estates of Germany, adopted the confession of faith which hath since obtained the name of the reformed, or Calvinistic.



## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE LEARNING AND HERESIES OF THE TIMES.

**T**HE general conflict, which now agitated the Christian world, contributed exceedingly to sharpen the ingenuity of the combatants ; and to excite the greatest zeal of enquiry into every branch of knowledge. And, as such seasons peculiarly rouse and bring forth the latent sparks of genius, which would otherwise lie dormant and unnoticed, never was there a more vivid light of learning displayed, and a greater number of men of the first abilities produced on the theatre of the world. Every where seminaries and universities were endowed, erected, enlarged, and the numbers of students immense. The mode of tuition also in all Protestant countries became amazingly improved ; and all the sciences, as well as theology, placed on a different footing. Aristotle, though still prevalent in the schools, was controled from exercising his former despotic rule, by the good sense, the enlarged views, and the sound divinity of the times. The ingenious Ramus, in France, introduced a different method of reasoning, which exasperated the old partisans of the Stagyrite : and Paracelsus began to open the road to the higher progress of experimental philosophy, by his researches into the first elements of bodies by fire and solution ; though still

tinctured with the follies of magic and alchemy, yet his chemistry led the way to all the noble improvements which have since been made.

The immense impressions of ancient classical writings, through the indefatigable labour of editors, and the happy invention of printing, spread a general diffusion of knowledge and love of the *belles lettres* through all the nations; especially those who were reformed; where science of every sort was peculiarly cultivated; and, above all, scriptural knowledge was pursued with singular avidity. Not only was the Bible now in every hand, in their native tongue; but the comments and expositions, critical and practical, of the reformers, excite the approbation, and continue to promote the edification of the present day, however highly advanced in all the attainments of criticism and literature. I will only mention the comment of Luther on the Epistle to the Galatians, as an enduring monument of sound divinity, and biblical erudition: and the institutes of Calvin equally admirable for their argument as their latinity. But the freedom of enquiry now introduced, in minds untaught of God, and rising on the stilts of vain imagination to a wisdom above what is written, was naturally productive of very fearful consequences. Science, when under the control of faith, and bowing before revelation, it presumes not to intrude into the things it hath not seen, is a blessing to the Church, and highly contributive to every thing which is excellent and of good report. But where men, vainly puffed up of their

fleshly mind, suppose *that* wisdom of man which is foolishness with God, and *that* intellect, which is darkened through corruption, capable of deciding respecting truths above our comprehension, though implying no contradiction to the truest reason, then error and blasphemy come in like a flood. Revelation stands at their bar as a culprit, because challenging implicit submission, which they are indisposed to pay ; and every thing mysterious must pass through the ordeal of their philosophy, and be rejected or admitted, only as it accords with, or differs from, their supposed infallible reason. Hence arose a numerous host of anti-christian doctors, who are still increasing, and threatening us with as fearful a deluge of false philosophy, to overwhelm the Christian name, as before it had been menaced by superstition and popery. Helvetius, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Gibbon, and all the infidel tribe of this day, are but the spawn of Pomponatius, Bodin, Rabelais, Montaigne, Bembo, Bruno, Taurellus, and a multitude of others, who then treated all religion with contempt and ridicule, and insinuated, that Christianity deserved no more respect than Paganism or Mahomedism ; and was but a cunning fable invented by priests to enslave the minds of the credulous. These acute geniuses, indeed, did not always agree in the extent of their discoveries ; some were disposed, as the followers of Socinus, to allow the Christian Saviour a name among the sages deserving honor ; others ridiculed the impostor, and turned his miracles into contempt ; yet

they professed veneration for a Supreme Being, and supposed their might be a God ; whilst the more advanced in science, doubted his very being or existence, and proceeded to the summit of human wisdom, to know exactly (what the fool or wicked man wishes, and saith in his heart) that “ there is no God.” France, eminent in that day as in our own, singularly took the lead in this happy discovery, hid from ages and generations ; yet, for a long while bending the neck under the yoke of authority, she dared not, till of late, assert the reign of liberty and atheism.

But let it be remembered, that learning is no more to be blamed for its abuse, than the sun for the venemous and poisonous reptiles hatched by his fervid beams. The revealed truths of God, so far from shunning investigation, call for the most accurate enquiry into their nature and evidence, and approve themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God, whom sin hath not enslaved, and taught to reject what he *dares not believe* ; and where science, falsely so called, hath not prejudiced the mind against evidence, abundantly more conclusive than any upon which the infidel builds his own system of religion, or no religion. The rationalists are mistaken if they think wisdom shall die with them. The simplicity which is in Christ will carry conviction of the truth to the heart, in defiance of all its open or insidious enemies, and more dangerous, though pretended philosophic friends. It stands not in the wisdom of man, but

in the power of God ; and as many as are ordained unto eternal life, believe to the saving of their souls. With regard to all the rest, their evil heart of unbelief is departed from the living God, and “ How then,” saith Christ, “ can ye believe ?”

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON THE ACCESSION TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

**I**N Europe scarcely any people now remained, who had not assumed the outward profession of Christianity. Even in Finland and Lapland, thinly scattered amidst their mossy mountains, and everlasting snows, the inhabitants received from some zealous Swedish missionaries the gospel, light. It is feared that some few continue in heathenism unto this day, or with such a tinge of Christianity only, as scarcely forms a shade of difference. In these inhospitable regions, magic and witchcraft have taken their last refuge.

But a vast field opened for the diffusion of the word of truth, in the discoveries made in both the Indies. The Spaniards and Portuguese, eager to extend the pale of popery as well as their own dominion, not only spread these by fire, sword, and inquisition, but enlisted under their missionary banners, regiments of friars, black and white, Franciscans, and Dominicans ; and above all the rest, the newly instituted and more specious company of Jesuits, who penetrated into the depths of America, Africa and Asia, and endeavoured to erect the banner of the Cross in China and Japan. AN. 1550. Nor were their labours without the appearance of vast success, however the religion

which they taught was far removed from the truth as it is in Jesus. To me, indeed, and those who think as I do, it will be a matter of doubt, whether the disciples of a Xavier, or the converts of Loyala and Dominic, with their partisans of the Romish superstition, should be admitted among the number of Christians ; or their labours be thought to have contributed to the promotion and furtherance, or the disgrace and hinderance of the true religion of Christ. Certain it is, that the methods these men pursued tended much more to make disciples to themselves and the pontiffs of Rome, than to form the mind to the reception of evangelical truth, or the heart to the love and service of a reconciled God. And the zeal of these apostles, fiercely as it burned to make converts to their opinions, burned more fiercely in inquisitorial flames, against all who wished to worship God in the way they called heresy, and opposed their falsehood and perversion of the doctrines of the gospel, as well as condemned their idolatry and superstitious practices, as subversive of its most fundamental principles.

A feeble effort was made from Geneva, to send missionaries to America, among the poor untutored Indians ; though no success appears to have followed the attempt. The settlements of the English in North America, at the latter end of the century, laid a foundation for a happier issue ; and opened that great door and effectual, for the preaching the gospel, which hath since been attended with such abundant success. Yet it must not be con-

cealed, and ought for ever to be lamented, that settlements made with commercial views, however ultimately the means of introducing the true religion, have usually commenced with acts of oppression highly indefensible; and with the erection of a dominion in lands to which the invaders had no just title. God can, indeed, bring good out of human evil, but the evil is not the less, because of the providential benefits ultimately resulting from the commerce or conquests of wicked men.



## CHAPTER VII.

## ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

WHEN the reformation became established, the different nations professing the Christian name divided : three great bodies, each claiming to be the *true Church*, and in general, *exclusively* so, composed the Christian world. The most ancient, the *Greek Church* ; the more modern, the *Latin or Western Church* ; and the late vast rent made from it, now distinguished by the *Protestant Church*. As my object in this account, is the *Spiritual Church* of Christ, and not the formal and nominal one, which under pomp, ceremonies, and superstition, had smothered all vital godliness, my chief attention will be confined to the latter. Nor therein shall I presume to find a general body of real Christians ; far from it. The faithful were ever few. The Protestants themselves, as a body, were only in *name*, what their confessions of faith should have led them to be in *reality* ; and therefore among *them*, as ever before, the *Spiritual Church* must be followed by the traces of the Cross under which it groaned, and the reproach of Christ, which ever rested upon the disciples of the Son of God ; as it must forever do on those, who, holding up the word of light, in its purity, and adorning it by a conversation becoming godliness, upbraid

their fellows for their hypocrisy, and dereliction of the principles which they have professed; bearing witness to their deeds that they are wrought in darkness: and thus as sharply condemning unfaithful Protestants, and apostates from the gospel, as the idolatries of popery, and the debasements of superstition.

## SECTION I.

### THE GREEK CHURCH.

**T**HIS eldest branch of Christianity still subsists, though reduced by the Mahomedan power to the lowest distress, and deprived of all its former splendor. Every attempt to form a union with, or rather to obtain a submission to the Roman pontiffs, constantly failed; and ended usually in mutual anathemas. After the taking of Constantinople, the glory of her patriarch faded greatly, and his dominion was equally reduced; though he still exercised some authority over the other three great patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Russia, the present chief member of his communion, has long withdrawn herself from his obedience, and is governed by her own patriarch, who acknowledges no dependence on Constantinople. His nominal dominion, however, is still wide, extending over all the East, Greece, the isles of the Archipelago, Walachia, Moldavia, and reaching into Poland. But the very abased

state of the Greeks, their ignorance, superstition, and total abandonment of all that can be reckoned worthy the name of Christian, renders their history little interesting, where the object is the enquiry into the living Church.

The divisions, that have been mentioned before, still subsisted in the Eastern church. The Nestorians, and Monophysite Christians had their independent patriarchs ; not under the Constantinopolitan jurisdiction, and if any real religion subsisted, it was probably to be found among the Nestorians, who were said to be neither so superstitious, nor so much loaded with rites and ceremonies as their brethren. The Jacobites, Cophts, Armenians, Abyssinians, and a variety of inferior sects, were branches of one or other of these greater sectaries. They had their own convents, bishops and pastors, equally jealous of their independence, and I fear, in general, far from every thing which could deserve the name of real godliness. The Romish missionaries have exerted their endeavours to bring over all these various sectaries to the church of Rome ; and have, by influence and money, prevailed on some congregations to make profession of obedience to the Roman pontiff ; on which new bishops and patriarchs have been pompously created to fill these Romish sees, under an idea of his recovered dominion. But in general it hath been an imposition ; and the converts to Romanism only held in subjection, whilst the cause operated, of poverty receiving support.

As impotent have been the efforts of Rome to obtain dominion over the rising nation of the Russians ; all attempts in the issue proved abortive ; and have for a long while been abandoned.

Whatever dignity or prerogatives are still preserved to the patriarch of Constantinople, he is obliged to purchase them dearly of the Turkish Vizier. And though an election to that high office is made by the adjacent bishops, yet through the ambition of supremacy, tempting these base ecclesiastics on one hand, and the avarice of the Turkish rulers on the other, the changes are frequent, and the see goes to the best bidder, who is sometimes hardly enthroned, before he loses his honors and purchase money, to be displaced by some other bishop, who can bribe higher.

The state of contempt, oppression, and ignorance into which they are sunk under the Mahomedan government, is deplorable ; and the corruption of manners among their priests and people awfully universal : tenacious only of their miserable forms and ceremonies, in which all their Christianity consists, and strangers alike to gospel doctrines, and the purity of godliness. The latest accounts of the Abyssinian church, by Bruce, hardly manifest a ray of true Christianity remaining. And Russia, even now, has scarcely emerged from the common sink of ignorance, intemperance, and superstition.

The Lutherans at first attempted to form a union with the patriarch of Constantinople, and the wise and gentle Melancthon, sent their confession of faith to him. But alas ! the pride of Greece was just as great as the pride of Rome ; and coalition with the superstitions of the one as impracticable as with the other. Since then I believe they have been left without farther application, to the enjoyment of their own saints, relics, dignity, poverty, pride and ignorance.

## SECTION II.

### THE CHURCH OF ROME.

**T**HE right arm of popish power and dominion was cut off by the reformation. Every attempt to regain their lost authority has proved abortive. Thousands upon thousands have fallen by the sword of war, and the inquisitors ; but the fatal blow was struck, and though every effort hath been made to heal the deadly wound, it was incurable ; and Rome now seems hastening fast to final destruction.

Yet the pontifical see remained eminent in power, wealth and dignity ; and lorded it, though not with such despotic power as before, over the nations under its obedience. A new model was formed for the political management of its interests ; and though none of its pretensions were abated, a

general council was still supposed by many to be paramount over all the Christians in the Roman pale. However, the infallibility of the holy see became better secured by a previous consultation with the principal cardinals, in matters of religious controversy ; which prudence now made necessary before any bull issued. A variety of separate *congregations* were established, for different branches of business, among which one *for relics* is not forgotten ; that all matters might be transacted with the profoundest policy, and occasions prevented for Protestant accusations. And in these *congregations* many things were carried, and adopted in opposition to the opinion of the infallible head.

The monarchs of Europe gained greatly by the reformation. The fulminations of the pontifical see lost all the momentum, that had before made the strongest Colossus to tremble. It was seen in the case of the English King, how dangerous it was to provoke those who could so easily avenge themselves ; and, therefore, the pontiffs cautiously contented with assuming the same power, made a virtue of their clemency in not exerting it. As they could proceed no longer in the way of open war, it became more needful to provide secret, but mighty agents to prop up the pillars of their tottering throne. The mendicant tribes had rather fallen into disgrace, and some of their branches had given much vexation to the holy see, as the *Fratricelli*. Auxiliaries were wanted, who should unite learning, zeal and genius, with the

most devoted submission to Rome and her pontiffs ; whose abilities might introduce them into the cabinets of monarchs as confessors ; whose science might dispel ignorance from the schools ; and whose unlimited obedience might render them proper tools to spread, as missionaries, the Roman supremacy, through the old world and the new ; exactly such was found in the *order of Jesuits*. The fanatic, but intrepid Loyola was their founder ; and the Roman see adopted them with cordial affection, as its devoted satellites, AN. 1550 ; imposing on them, among other common vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, an additional engagement, “ to hasten without hesitation to any part of the earth, and for any purpose which the pontiff should enjoin them.” For this end, a choice selection was made, of the most ingenious, the most learned, the most adroit, and the best skilled in mechanic arts, as well as mathematics, painting, and philosophy. Their zeal and activity roused the slumbering Franciscans and Dominicans to jealousy. They buckled on their armour afresh, and sharpened their weapons to contest the palm of victory with their brethren of the new fraternity ; and in nothing yield to them in devotion, and loyalty to the holy see.

The accommodating manners of this new order ; their profound dissimulation ; their artful insinuation into the courts of princes, and the secrets of men ; their penetration in the discovery of the best means of effecting their purposes ; and their easiness in relaxing the severity of penance and mo-

als, according to the rank of the penitent ; soon procured them universal preference. All the malice and envy of their brethren, though exerted to bring them into suspicion, and to diminish their influence, was abortive. The favour of Rome, but much more their own policy and cunning, preserved and increased the credit of the order, and raised it to the summit of eminence, above all their fellows ; an eminence they long maintained : and by their activity and artifice supported and enlarged the bounds of the papal jurisdiction.

Yet, in the vigour of youth, and the zenith of their prosperity, the good archbishop of Dublin, Brown, ventured to pronounce their doom with a precision approaching prophecy. After speaking in his sermon of the wondrous progress the Jesuits were making in the world, and which their very constitution was formed to produce, he adds, but, “ God shall suddenly cut off this society, even by the hand of those who have most succoured them and made use of them, so that at the end they shall become odious to all nations. They shall have no resting place upon earth, and a Jew shall have more favour than a Jesuit.” The appointed time came. The Roman power itself is humbled to the dust, and to this nothing has more contributed than the destruction of this very order by the papal see itself. AN. 1773.

A variety of other *orders* arose, whose names I shall only mention, without their particularities, the *Theatines*, *Barnabites*, *Fathers of Somasquo*,



*Priests of the Oratory*, &c. all professing to revive the ancient sanctity of manners, and to exhibit a purer model than the debased state of the monastic orders, and the clergy in general afforded. This decline was a favourite topic of the reformers. Indeed their rebukes, I may call them invectives, roused the whole sacerdotal tribe to a greater decency of conduct. The inferior clergy, at least, put on a face of gravity, and external sobriety and seriousness; and the different *orders* entered upon various reforms; a proof how much they were needed. Hence arose the new branch of Franciscans, who adopted the rigorous rules of St. Francis, and bear the name of *Capuchins*, from the additional cowl added to their habit; which innovation offended highly many of their brethren; but was confirmed by the Pope, and continues the badge of their order.

So far, indeed, the church of Rome itself, highly profited by the reformation. The honor of their vocation, and the desire to remove the reproaches of the Lutherans, produced much more beneficial effects than all the canons of the council of Trent. Nor less did the same cause operate in stimulating them to excel in literature, wherein the Jesuits set an admirable example. Indefatigable in pursuit of knowledge themselves, they became the preceptors to others, in all polite literature as well as theological learning. Still adhering, however, to Aristotelian subtilties in dispute, in order to puzzle adversaries whom they could not confute. Hence the Romish church furnished a host of

men, high in reputation for attainments in science of every kind. And thus they were as much indebted to the reformation for the revival of literature, as for the amendment of their morals.

Yet this amendment rather reached the inferior than the superior clergy. The popes themselves, though more decent in general than before, continued, many of them, to dishonour the high station in which they were placed, and shewed themselves as much beyond shame as above control. In the beginning of the century, Pius the Third, had, besides other acts of atrocity charged upon him, raised his two bastard sons, in their infancy, to be cardinals. And his successor, JULIUS the Third, was no sooner seated on the throne of St. Peter, than he placed the red hat on the head of the boy, who was the keeper of his monkeys, and the object of his infamous passion.

The greater bishops, whose immense revenues afforded them all the magnificence of earthly grandeur, displayed few of the features of the lowly Nazarene. Many of them, princes of the empire, exhibited all the pomp and luxury of majesty. And courts of monarchs attached the prelates in general, more than their dioceses ; to which they regarded it as a kind of banishment, to be confined. Yet, upon the whole, throughout the papal pale, there was a considerable change for the better in the manners of the clergy ; and they became in general less profligate, and their minds better informed,

AN. 1545. The council of Trent had assembled to ascertain the *doctrines*, restore the *discipline*, and correct the *manners* of the Church ; to all which it applied but ineffectual and miserable remedies. Though the papal power swayed all the deliberations, and the legates dictacted the decrees, still the popes arrogated to themselves the sole right of *interpreting them*. And for that purpose, an especial *congregation* at Rome was appointed. So that after all the pretences of the council's deliberation and decision, it remained with the pontiff to enforce what he approved, and to interpret the rest according to his own pleasure and interest. Thus, after the farce of many years assembling and debating, all depended still upon the great interpreter. It was impossible, therefore, that any other result should spring from all this wondrous body of collected wisdom, than just what we see, the maintenance of the despotic power of the Roman prelate, and the confirmation of all past abuses, with the addition of many more.

I shall not enter into the decrees of this council, which would carry me too far, and shall only observe that its decisions were admitted only partially in some states, and with modifications and salvos in others. Nor did its determinations put an end to the disputes of Catholics among themselves, any more than prove in the least satisfactory or convincing to the Protestants. Their boasted *unity* of doctrine was very weak indeed ; and the reproach cast on the Protestants, and their differences of opinion, and which indeed they deserved for their

religious disputes, was as applicable to the papists themselves. Franciscans against Dominicans, and Thomists against Scotists, maintained unceasing battle. The bishops contended for their divine right and jurisdiction against the pope, who denied them both, but as a favour of the holy see. The Gallican church maintained her liberties against papal encroachments; and all on this side the mountains exalted the supremacy of general councils above the Roman see. The Jesuits drew upon themselves the keenest invectives of the Benedictines and others, for their impudent encroachments, and suspicious morality. Matters of the greatest moment continued to be disputed, nor could all the efforts of the pontiffs compel or induce the angry combatants to silence. The power and jurisdiction of the see of Rome—the subjects of the Catholic church—the nature, necessity, and efficacy of grace—the principles of morals—the operation of the sacraments—the best mode of Christian instruction—These, and many other points, were disputed with abundant acrimony.

The council of Trent made no alteration in rites and ceremonies. Many, indeed, desired a reformation in the grosser abuses; but this was touching priestcraft in a tender part. The papal legates and their party therefore warded off the blow. Idolatry, images, relics, frauds, maintained their ground. Indeed, where the Protestants are still numerous, or their proximity makes more circumspection needful, the more offensive acts of idolatry, and the grosser frauds are avoided. But in the more

enslaved countries of Romanism, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and their colonies, their superstition still reigns triumphant, and fraud and folly appear without a blush. The blood of St. Januarius regularly liquefies ; and the milk of the Virgin is as fresh as if it had been just drawn from her breasts in Palestine.

The Bible was one of the forbidden books which the people might not consult without permission. And no man must comment on the Scriptures, even in private, in any way different from the language of the Church : nor print without a license. So truly is the key of knowledge reserved by the popes in their own custody. And wherever their imperious decrees are obeyed, the Holy Scriptures are a book sealed, and all divine knowledge confined to the miserable mass and breviary, and such wretched discourses as serve to fix the ignorance of divine things more inveterate, by inspiring confidence in their own deceived and deceiving spiritual guides.

It was ridiculous enough, that in this wise assembly, the *Vulgate*, the ancient Latin translation of the Bible then in use, though full of the grossest mistakes and deviations from the original, was consecrated forever as the only *authentic* and *perfect* translation ; and withal it was determined, that this version should be *accurately revised* and *corrected*, and a *new edition* published *by authority* ; and this too *was never done* : so that the people were left in the strangest situation imaginable, and the teachers themselves in circumstances the most

embarrassing : compelled to use as a consecrated translation, from which they may not depart, a version confessedly in need of correction ; and promised a new edition still more perfect, which was never taken in hand.

The state of pure religion, in a Church so corrupt, even in the fountain head itself, may easily be conceived : where all godliness consisted in implicit obedience to the holy see, and exact attention to the formularies of devotion, the performance of penance, and the purchase of indulgences. Yet we must not suppose that the whole body was utterly destitute of the life of Christianity. Amidst all the prevailings of iniquity, and the servitude of superstition, the writings of some of those who were called *mystical divines*, shew, that they cultivated still the religion of the heart ; and however debased by prejudice and error, supposed the life of godliness to consist in a state of conscious favour and communion with God ; producing real purity of mind, and holiness of conversation. But it must be confessed, these were few and hidden : in silence and retirement they avoided observation, and, therefore, escaped the charge of heresy, which would have certainly fastened upon them, if they had not been content to keep their religion to themselves. Jesuitical religion, inquisitorial religion, the established religion of popery, will allow us to look to such a religion with abhorrence only, and no hope.

We turn therefore to a more pleasing scene, the Church reformed from the abominations of popery ;

not but that we shall find therein much to lament, and much to condemn. Yet, there the living body subsisted of pure religion, and undefiled; therein we shall discover genuine Christianity; and, though small, a seed that shall be to the Lord for a generation, the remnant according to the election of grace.

### SECTION III.

#### ON THE CHURCH REFORMED FROM THE ERRORS OF POPERY.

**I** AM entering on a subject, in which it is difficult to maintain that absolute impartiality which is so desirable; and not to be warped into misrepresentation by educational prejudices. To have a decided opinion in a matter so momentous, as regards the salvation of men's souls, is our duty, and highly approvable: but, though a Protestant, I will pledge myself intentionally not to deceive; and will speak the truth as far as I know it, whether respecting Protestant or Papist, or the different denominations among ourselves; without hiding the blemishes of my own. I can truly aver, I seek simply truth, as it is revealed in the Bible; and I mean to embrace it in a profession open and undisguised, of whatever I find in the Scripture, respecting the doctrine or discipline of the true Church: and wherever I am mistaken in my representations, my ears are open to conviction, and my pen ready to correct unintentional errors.

The body of Protestants who separated from the Romish communion, may be comprised under three grand divisions. In each of these a variety of shades of difference in doctrine and discipline will be found. The *Lutheran*—the *Calvinists* and the *Heterodox*—or such as departed from their brethren in those articles of faith, which both the others had laid down as fundamental, and essential to salvation.

### 1st. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

THE great Reformer, Luther, left his name, as the mark of union in that Church, which was in a peculiar manner indebted to his labours. We have seen its rise, through the intrepid opposition of an Augustin monk, to the papal abuses ; the exclusion of those who adhered to him from the Roman pale, by the excommunication of Leo X. the vigorous struggle, till *the confession of Augsburg*, when it began to grow into its present form ; its final emancipation from all pontifical authority ; and its legal independence established by the *pacification of Passau* ; and lastly, by the *peace of Augsburg*.

The leading principle of the reformation is, that THE BIBLE ALONE CONTAINS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS, which every man is to read and consider ; and thence alone to draw all the articles of his faith and practice ; and nothing is binding upon the conscience, but what is there clearly revealed, or necessarily deducible from the Scripture declarations. These are generally admitted



principles ; but the Protestant Churches have severally differed in the application of some of them, and manifested a most blameable bigotry and severity towards their brethren, in enforcing their own interpretations of the Scripture ; and, that oftentimes, according to their own acknowledgments, in matters not essential to salvation.

To maintain nearer union of sentiment and worship among themselves, each Church has adopted particular confessions and formularies, which have been laid down as necessary to communion with that body ; and thus hath often contracted grievously the circle of exclusion respecting their brethren, who hold with them one head, Christ, and one faith in all essential articles.

The Lutheran doctrine is avowed to be comprised in the *Augsburg Confession* ; and in Melancthon's *Apology* for it, in reply to the popish objections ; these are regarded as of first authority : though it must be confessed, some of the opinions respecting the real presence in the Eucharist, are far more objectionable, in the *Apology* than in the *Confession*. The *articles of Smalkald*, drawn up by Luther, with a view to heal if possible, the disputes raised, have softened down some of the harsher expressions of the *Augsburg Confession* ; and with the *catechisms* of the great Master, are received in that Church as directorial. Whilst the *form of concord*, asserting the *ubiquity* of Christ's human body, and the *real presence* in the sacrament, with the brand of heresy, and the sentence

of excommunication fixed upon all who did not receive these dogmas, though it was strongly maintained and supported by the more rigid Saxon divines of the Lutheran persuasion, was as warmly disputed and rejected, by the more moderate.

The leading doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, are, *the true and essential divinity of the Son of God* ;

*His substitution and vicarious sacrifice* ; and

*The necessity, freedom, and efficacy of divine grace upon the human heart.*

Where God, the Son, is thus known, as a real Saviour to the uttermost ; and God the Spirit acknowledged in the experience of his influence on the conscience, why should any thing afterwards be permitted to break the bands of union between those who have been admitted to *friendship with God* ?

Respecting the government of the Church and its forms, it is admitted universally among the Lutherans, that the Supreme Ruler of the State, is the head of all authority, in what relates to causes ecclesiastical as well as civil ; and, that the Church is subject to the powers that are established ; though no power has authority to alter the revealed word of God, or to impose upon the conscience arbitrarily its own dictates—consent, not constraint, must form Christian union. The forms, therefore, of religion to be observed, though gener-

ally such as had been before in the Church, were purged from superstition and error ; and these forms not so uniformly prescribed, but that some have retained rites, which others have rejected without a breach of unity of spirit ; as they agree that indifferent things shall be left indifferent.

This is singularly evident in the mode of ecclesiastical government established in the Lutheran church. In Sweden it continues to be episcopal. In Norway the same. In Denmark, under the name of *superintendant*, all episcopal authority is retained. Whilst, through Germany, the superior power is vested in a *consistory*, over which there is a president, with a distinction of rank and privileges, and a subordination of inferior clergy to their superiors, different from the parity of Presbyterianism.

Though the same liturgical form is not every where observed, the leading features of worship are alike. The public service on the Lord's day is universal ; and occasional worship at other times. The holy Scriptures are every where read in the mother tongue—Prayer, without a liturgy, though after a directory, is offered to God in Christ—with praise in psalms and hymns—Sermons are regularly preached for general instruction—Catechising used for the rising generation—The Lord's supper is celebrated frequently, by all, who, after examination of the minister, are judged intelligent and admissible. The great transactions of our Lord are commemorated at the usual seasons ; and some

Lutheran churches observed festivals, which others have not admitted.

The article of church censures so much abused and so much neglected, was by the Lutheran regulation lodged with the clergy and courts of their superintendance; and in consequence of abuses on the one hand of this spiritual power, and contempt on the other of its censures, this branch of discipline is in a very degraded state: and the more corruption multiplies in manners, the less ability is there to restrain them. Indeed, in the Lutheran, as in the Anglican Church, the personal influence of a good example, and the zealous discharge of the ministerial office, will do more to awe offenders and revive discipline, than any sentences pronounced in spiritual courts. Perhaps the feeling complaints so often uttered of the want of all discipline, would be most effectually removed, if those who made them, set themselves more zealously and faithfully to warn the unruly, to instruct the ignorant, to restore the fallen; and in preaching and living, to set forth the true apostolic doctrine and practice. Their rebukes would make the proudest tremble; and the uniformity of their conversation give authority to their exhortations.

The Lutheran Church had by the peace of Augsburg, gained a first establishment; but the very contract which had secured its liberty, checked its progress; as no prelate, dignitary, or other ecclesiastic, could come over to this faith and worship, without the forfeiture of all his ecclesiastical preferment. To this the Archbishop of Co-

logne was obliged to submit ; preferring a wife and Lutheranism to his archbishopric, which he was compelled to resign. However, the stedfast abettors of this faith, zealous for the truths they held, disappointed all the open and secret attacks of their adversaries, to bring them back to the house of their prison, and firmly stood their ground, producing a noble army of defendants, men of the highest eminence for literature, as well as zeal and devotedness to Christ. Among them, Melancthon, Carlostadt, Camerarius, Flaccus, and Chemnitz, deservedly hold the first places. By these, learning in all its branches was promoted and cultivated. The miserable scholastic theology was greatly exploded by Luther and his noble associates, from a conviction of its barren and unfruitful nature, and a more rational mode of investigation of the divine truths introduced, where the Bible, not Aristotle, prevailed. Yet they despised not the fair deductions of syllogistic reasoning, whilst they wished to banish the jargon of terms, and the subtilties of sophisms, which tended merely to puzzle, instead of elucidating the subject.

The *Theosophists*, disciples of Paracelsus, addicted to chymistry, and the solution of bodies into their first principles, with the most diligent experiments, joined enthusiastic ideas of inward illuminations, as the means of arriving at discoveries above the native reach of human faculties. Hoffman, and the famous Behman, were the leaders of this school. An air of singular piety and mystic devotion engaged a number of disciples ; and

names, highly respectable, are mentioned as favourers of them, such as Arntd and Wegelius.

As theological science was peculiarly pursued, many eminent expositors of Scripture appeared ; none more revered than the great Reformer himself, from whose sentiments it is to be justly lamented, that his disciples have so greatly departed ; and whilst they honor him with such singular devotion, dispute the most explicit and characteristic doctrines of his theology, of which I have given a specimen from Luther's tract against Erasmus. I may quote an acknowledgment of this, from the translator of Mosheim, whether to the honor or disgrace of Lutheranism, let every impartial judge determine. " The doctrines of "*absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human* "*impotence*, were never carried to a more excessive "*length, nor maintained with a more virulent ob-* "*stinacy, by any divine than they were by Luther ;* "*but in these times he has very few followers, in* "*this respect, even among those who bear his* "*name.*" Of whom Dr. Mosheim also says, "*That the doctrine of the Lutheran Church hath* "*changed by degrees its original form, and been* "*improved and perfected in many respects, es-* "*pecially in the doctrines of free will, predestinu-* "*tion, and other points, in which the Lutheran* "*systems of divinity of an earlier date are so far* "*surpassed by those of modern times.*" Perhaps theological doctors in this matter may still differ, and prefer the *ancient truths* to *modern improvements* ; nor think the lengths, to which Luther carried

them, *excessive*, nor his defence of them either *virulent* or *obstinate*. Certain it is, that if there be any thing in Lutheranism peculiarly excellent, they plead for it with a very bad grace, who in points of such importance, differ from their leader, and impeach his wisdom and his zeal in defence of what he at least esteemed of the greatest consequence. If Bossuet, and the papal writers, reproached them with their variations from their great Reformer, who can dare to say, there is not a cause ?

The doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, had never a clearer expositor than Luther ; the plain and literal sense of the Scripture he adhered to as to be always followed, in preference to all allegorical and fanciful interpretations : and his morals were as pure as his doctrines were evangelical. Nor can I by any means think, either Luther or Melancthon defective, as has been suggested, for not giving a *regular system of morality*, when, it is acknowledged, by those who presume to censure them, that they gave the fullest practical rules and instructions under the heads of the *law, sin, free will, faith, hope, and charity*. All other morals that spring not from these Christian principles, I presume they disclaimed and disdained.

Whatever faults men were pleased to find with Luther's doctrine on the points above mentioned when he was dead, none murmured disapprobation among the host of his followers whilst he was alive. In the nature of the Eucharist, Carlostadt

had dared to differ from him, and to be in the right; in the rest they were unanimous. It must be admitted, that Luther was a sharp disputant, and hardly brooked opposition—that the summit of eminence, to which he was deservedly advanced, might make him jealous, or treat those who differed from him with too much asperity. He was a man of vehement spirit—the times were rude—and differences of opinion were not met with the candor and politeness of more modern days. I mean not this to excuse what is condemnable, but as a caution not to judge him rashly, if his zeal at any time appears to overstep the bounds of temperance. He was a man, a sinful man, a man of like passions with other corrupted creatures; exposed to peculiar provocations, and of a temper naturally irascible. Let those who blame him avoid his mistakes, and imitate his excellencies.

I have before spoken of his harsh treatment of Carlostadt, whom his interest with the Elector drove from his native land; and whatever was pretended as the cause, the real one may be found in their disputes about the Eucharist. The same difference of opinion produced his displeasure against Schwendkfeldt, a Saxon nobleman, of eminent piety and abilities, who, inclining more to the simplicity of Zuinglius, and professing his opposition to the errors of Luther in this point of doctrine, experienced the same harsh treatment from his sovereign, and was driven into banishment.

AN. 1538. His dispute with his disciple Agri-cola, on the moral law and its obligations, res-



pected a subject of more importance than the ideas of *real presence*. Carrying his views of the abolition of the Mosaical obligations, to the moral as well as the ceremonial law, Agricola pleaded that we were no longer under it, as our rule of obedience, but under the gospel, as a nobler dispensation of faith working by love. From this man the term *Antinomian* became applied to those who followed this idea; and some are said to have pushed the doctrine to the support of the most dissolute and immoral practices, as perfectly compatible with a state of union with Christ. But this certainly was not the case with Agricola, and many others, that have been charged with Antinomian principles; who, however they may speak disparagingly of the law, as binding Christian men, would disclaim the horrid conclusions which their adversaries have presumed to draw for them. Luther's vigilance and zeal engaged Agricola either to explain himself, or to retract what was erroneous in his positions, and he continued in his ministry.

But, though Luther's personal weight, aided by his vehemence, and supported by the Protestant princes, who so highly revered him, contributed to maintain an appearance of unity in the Lutheran Church, and to crush every attempt at innovation in the established opinions; yet no sooner were his eyes closed, than it appeared evident that in several points his dearest friends thought differently from him. The commanding authority and warmth of Luther, in a sort overawed the gentle, but most learned Melancthon. He would not

start a subject of dispute ; his spirit was yielding and conceding to a fault. No marvel he shunned the least opposition to his admired friend. When his master was taken from his head, and he became the leader of the Saxon ecclesiastical establishment, he would have purchased peace with Rome by tolerating, and submitting to, what Luther would have rejected with abhorrence. He could be even content to soften down the very doctrine which the great reformer placed as the criterion, *stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*, of the true or apostate church ; and to admit some modification of *justification by faith alone*, by abating something from man's absolute incapacity to promote his own conversion unto God, and allowing the necessity of good works for salvation. Though he had been silent on the controversy of the Eucharist, and before coincided with Luther ; he latterly could not receive the strong ideas of *real presence*, suggested by his friend, but wished at least the definition might be left so ambiguous, as to admit those who adopted the opinion of *symbol only*, in the Eucharist, to friendly communion. No sooner had he therefore ventured to promulge openly, what he had before either suppressed or only modestly hinted, than the rigid Lutherans rose in arms against him. And those disturbances began, which to a man of his temper and feeling must have been peculiarly painful.

The first grand occasion of division in the Lutheran Church, arose from the reference made to Melancthon and other Saxon divines, on the subject of the imperial decree, called *the Interim*, and how far they could submit to it. His pacific

spirit, counting no sacrifices too great for peace, persuaded acquiescence in all matters of *indifference* to the Emperor's edict. But in these indifferent matters, he reckoned doctrines of deep and essential consequence, in the eyes of Luther and his true followers, particularly in the *article of justification*. And as yielding was he respecting *ceremonies* and *papal jurisdiction* ; which the great Reformer would have spurned with abhorrence. No wonder therefore that Luther's most zealous disciples, with the learned Flaccus at their head, charged these accommodating divines with betrayal of the truth, and with apostacy from the vital principle of Lutheranism.

A sharp controversy, therefore, arose, concerning what could be called *indifferent* ; and what ought, or ought not, to be yielded to Rome. This naturally led to points of the first consequence, respecting faith—good works—the prevention of grace—the co-operation of the human will—in all which Melancthon expressed himself in a language that Luther would have rejected with indignation. Since nothing could be farther from his sentiments than modification on any of these subjects, respecting which he had declared himself in the most explicit manner. Nor would Melancthon's explanation, that the *impressions of grace were accompanied with certain correspondent actions of the human will*, have been borne for a moment by the great master ; and if not branded as absolutely heretical, by Flaccus, and his adherents, at least they exposed Melancthon and his followers to heavy charges of

semi-pelagianism ; to which no doubt such modes of expression led. They excited also just apprehensions, that even more was intended than expressed, under such unknown terms, in the nomenclature of Lutheran orthodoxy.

AN. 1557. Flaccus, the chief, in that amazing work of ecclesiastical learning, "the Magdeburg Centuriators," was advanced to the chair of divinity of Jena, by the zealous Lutheran sons of the deprived elector John, who had formed this seminary with a view to maintain inviolate the pure doctrines of the great Reformer. This gave him scope, as it more immediately called him to defend the master, and to attack his opposers. Thus the breach widened, and a schism was apprehended between the free grace, and the semi-pelagian Lutherans.

AN. 1560. Strigelius, the disciple of Melancthon, maintained at Jena, in opposition to Flaccus, the free will doctrine, and man's co-operation in conversion. For this he was accused by the professor to the duke, imprisoned and compelled to recant ; or at least appear to do so, in order to obtain his discharge. It is grievous to observe, that the true Protestant principles were so little followed ; and each side courted the arm of civil power to aid the force of their arguments. I wave entering on other controversies of less important subjects, which disturbed the peace of the Lutheran Church, and were sure to give occasion of triumph and reproach to their popish adversaries.

During the life of Melancthon, the contest raged ; nor was it quieted by his decease. His son-in-law, Peucer, a man as respectable for his learning, as eminent for piety, a professor at Wittenberg, had formed a considerable party among the Saxon divines, who adopted with him the sentiments of Zuinglius, respecting the Eucharist, in preference to those of Luther ; and to which Melancthon in his latter years acceded. AN. 1571. These they wished to introduce into the Saxon church ; and to alter the established doctrine of *the real presence*. A solemn convocation of divines was held at Dresden on the subject ; and a formula of agreement drawn up, favourable to the friends of Peucer, and denying the ubiquity of Christ's human body. AN. 1571. At this the rigid Lutherans fired, and gaining the elector, under the dreaded apprehensions that the foundations of Lutheranism were ready to be overturned, a new convention at Torgaw, established the *real presence*, AN. 1574, and instigated the elector to seize, imprison, and banish, all the secret Calvinists : and to reduce their followers by every act of violence, to renounce their sentiments, and confess the *ubiquity*. Ten years did the oppressed Peucer suffer imprisonment, in the severest manner, for his opinions : and proved, that persecution was not peculiar to popish ecclesiastics. Effectually to eradicate this dreaded innovation, and drive from Saxony and the Lutheran pale, all who inclined to the Helvetic opinion respecting Christ's body in the sacrament, the same divines who had drawn up the *decrees of Torgaw*, produced the

*form of concord*, AN. 1577, in which, the *real manducation* of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist was established, and heresy and excommunication laid on all who refused this as an article of faith; with pains and penalties to be enforced by the secular arm. The bigoted Saxon established this *form of concord*, through the extent of his authority; and many other Lutheran churches adopted it. But what was pretended as a means of terminating this controversy, produced more violent dissensions than ever. All the Calvinistic, or reformed party, lifted up their voices against such a decision, not only as unscriptural in itself, but as tending in the strongest manner to preclude all Christian union between real Protestants. The favourers of the Zuinglian notions of the Eucharist, felt the severity of the edicts. The moderate Lutherans themselves abhorred such hasty censures. The friends and disciples of the amiable Melancthon could not bear to see his sentiments thus treated: and from a variety of motives, the *form of concord* was rejected by a considerable if not the larger part of the Lutheran Church.

Nor in Saxony itself was there wanting a vast number, who, though compelled to suppress their opinions, waited only the favourable moment to shew themselves. AN. 1586. This the death of the elector Augustus afforded, and his successor being more favourable to the moderate Lutherans, they attempted to suppress the *form of concord*, and *Crellius*, the first minister, being on their side, they prepared the people for the change they

meditated, by lesser alterations, such as the omission of *exorcism* which had been used in baptism ; by a *catechism*, favourable to the Calvinistic opinions ; and by a *new edition of the Bible*. But the rigid Lutherans, exactly like *our High church and Sacheverel for ever*, caught fire at these unhallowed changes, making the nation think the Church in danger ; and the clergy, inflaming the populace, produced much tumult, and sharp interference of the magistracy. The tables turned on the death of the elector Christian I. AN. 1591. The rigid Lutherans resumed their empire, and their adversaries were imprisoned and banished. The *form of concord* was restored to its vigor, and the unhappy Crellius, who had been the great support of the party, put to death. AN. 1601. On such juridical execution of Protestants by Protestants, originating in disputes about religious opinions, if I could, I would fix a brand of reprobacy, and lift up my feeble voice against persecution of every kind. But I am conscious, whilst men are as they are, church power will always be abused, and unchristian intolerance wish to kindle the flames against all who may venture to differ from the dominant party. Indeed the most unlike the great Head of the Church are they, who thrust themselves into high places ; and whose pride and insolence are gratified in trampling upon their brethren. Ye followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, mark the man, that hates and injures his brother for his opinions : he is a murderer, in whatever church he is found.

The doctrines of Luther, on predestination and grace, were too uncongenial to the pride and wisdom of the unhumbled heart, not to excite strong opposition. Huber of Wittemberg, distinguished himself in defence of the plan of *universal redemption*, which has since been generally adopted in the Lutheran Church, but in those purer days of evangelical doctrine, provoked just indignation, and occasioned his deposition and banishment. Violence on all sides was carried to the extreme. The man who subscribes an established doctrine justly forfeits his advantages, when he renounces the ground of his tenure : but let him live as free as his brethren, and defend his sentiments in love, and in the true spirit of meekness. The misery is, that in all these unhappy disputes, human passions rage, instead of the simple pursuit of truth and godliness.

To conclude ; in the Lutheran Church were found men *great* in every view ; in erudition and piety. But, as must be the case universally, the multitude were only believers in the lump. The generality of clergy in every established church, enter it as a profession ; and are too like their fellows in all worldly pursuits, and human passions. The faithful, and really godly, are every where comparatively few, who serve the Lord Christ out of a pure heart fervently, and regard their work as their wages. I doubt not the living members of Christ's body, within the Lutheran pale, in that day, were many and glorious. At the first dawn of reformation, strict piety was more universally



cultivated among the professors : but declensions early crept in with a peaceable establishment ; and when no longer under the cross, the departure from truth and purity, presently appeared. Before the close of the century, Mosheim acknowledges, that, “ the manners of the Lutherans were “ remarkably depraved—that multitudes offend-  
 “ ed the public by audacious irregularities—that  
 “ discipline vanished, either through the careless-  
 “ ness or impotence of the clerical arm.” And those who distinguished themselves from their brethren, by greater zeal, purity of doctrine, deadness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, and spirituality of conversation, were marked, and gained a name of peculiarity, that separated them from their fellows, content to bear a testimony, by their lives and labours, to a kingdom neither Lutheran nor Calvinist exclusively, but consisting in righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost : the true Spirit of the Church universal, which is neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, but of Christ.

## 2d. OF THE CHURCHES CALLED REFORMED, OR CALVINISTIC.

THE name of *Protestants*, equally applied to all dissenters from the church of Rome. As these separated into different communities, they were distinguished by different denominations ; the term *reformed church* was therefore appropriated to those, who, differing from the Lutheran opinions in points of doctrine or discipline, preferred, espec-

ally in the great articles respecting the real presence in the Eucharist, the doctrine of Zuinglius and Calvin, to Luther. And as Calvin was the most eminent, the several churches who adopted his sentiments, generally bore his name, as the Lutherans that of their great reformer. Not that Luther or Calvin pretended to support any doctrines but what they deduced from the Scriptures, and confirmed by the evidence of the fathers, especially Augustin. The Calvinistic churches, though united in the confession of the same fundamental articles of faith, in which indeed, the only union essential is to be sought, were formed on very different models; and chiefly followed the several forms of government, which subsisted in the countries where the reformation prevailed, and the different views which the rulers in different nations entertained of the most scriptural church order. For from the New Testament and the apostolic precedents, all professed to derive their several establishments. The greater body adopted the model of the Helvetic churches, and especially of Geneva, where Calvin presided, and had a chief influence over all those of the reformed profession. Switzerland, Germany, France, Scotland, Holland, and all the foreign Calvinistic churches, erected the form of government called *Presbyterian*, in which a parity of rank was established among the ministers themselves; a *synodical* government, consisting of clergy and laity, elected to manage the concerns of the particular churches; and a general assembly of the whole church to decide on momentous cases, in each of

their several dominions or districts. Yet this establishment was not exactly similar in any two churches, who held the same confession of faith, and maintained in the general outline, the same form of discipline and government.

The churches of England and Ireland chose to retain *episcopacy* in their government, as, in their apprehension, more congenial with monarchical government, and primitive practice ; whilst in all the great articles of faith, they held with their foreign brethren, and maintained communion with them. This Church formed a body, resembling the state, sitting in two houses of convocation, under the same head, where all the great concerns ecclesiastical were to be settled, with the consent of the monarch.

In ceremonies, the reformed churches differed greatly. The first and great reformer Zuinglius, who began before Luther his bold attack of popery, carried his reform far beyond him. Whilst Luther tolerated images, tapers, altars, exorcism, and auricular confession, *he* swept all the trappings of superstition away ; reducing the worship to the standard of utmost simplicity, divested alike of garb or ornament. The other churches have admitted some ceremonies ; the episcopal churches the most, as more conformed to the dignity of the hierarchy. The spirit of devotion hardly needs the adventitious helps which formality supposes important. Yet who will refuse his approbation of whatever may have a real tendency to enliven

the worship, or engage the attention ? Such surely will music be found, when under proper regulation.

*Zurich*, the cradle of the reformed, professed in the article of the Lord's Supper, the simple acknowledgment of its being a *sign* and nothing more, according to the opinion of Zuinglius, and his excellent and able associate Œcolampadius. Herein the Lutherans were at too great a distance to approach, and all efforts of conciliation proved abortive. As this was a matter of first concern in that day, it may be useful to observe the gradations of opinion on this subject, among the churches.

ZUINGLIUS and his followers regarded the Eucharist as a mere *sign* or *symbol*, of which all professing Christians, whether regenerate or unregenerate, might partake alike.

CALVIN supposed the *sign* or *symbol* to convey a sacramental pledge of blessing, and that a *spiritual presence* of Christ attended it to the regenerate and believing only ; whilst to others the elements remained as common food : and this the Church of England adopted.

LUTHER maintained, that the elements remained still bread and wine, but that a *real presence of Christ united with them*, in virtue of the *ubiquity* of his supposed human nature, and a *real manducation of Christ's body* followed ; this was termed *consubstantiation*.

THE POPISH DOCTORS, contended for a *real transmutation* of the elements, which, under the form of bread and wine, *lost their nature and substance*, after consecration, and were actually changed into the very body and blood of Christ, by *transubstantiation*.

AN. 1531. ZUINGLIUS fell in battle, attending with his exhortations his countrymen, as was the duty of his office. With this his adversaries presumed to upbraid him, and insult his memory, however undeserving reproach. The triumph of the popish bigot, Sir Thomas Moore, speaks what spirit he was of: but his loss was more than repaired in Calvin, who soon after took the lead at Geneva, and was regarded as the patriarch of the reformed churches. His learning, piety and zeal, attracted from all countries students to Geneva, now become a kind of seminary to the reformed churches, as Wittemberg had been to the Lutheran; and from thence they issued forth, to spread the opinions, and to recommend the model of their admired teacher. Hence a band of union was formed through England, Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland, by similarity of studies, and uniformity in opinion, respecting the grand theological tenets; regarding as a matter of more indifference the system of government and discipline which each formed for themselves.

Luther had given the civil magistrate the supreme power in ecclesiastical regulations, and Zuinglius had therein concurred with him; yet,

whilst he made the clergy dependent on the civil government, he admitted a difference of rank, and appointed a superintendant over the clergy of his canton.

Calvin maintained the independence of the Church on the magistrate, as competent to form its own government and regulations, in synods and consistories, under the protecting power of the civil ruler, with perfect parity among the presbyters.

The Church of England steered a middle course. All supremacy of legal dominion being in the King, and the two houses of parliament. Their decisions only constitute law. But the clergy in convocation, with the consent of the monarch, may form regulations binding on their own body, as the bye-laws of a corporation, though not universally obligatory. For a long while past this convocation hath ceased to meet for ecclesiastical affairs; at least they only meet and adjourn, without proceeding to any business.

France, Holland, and Scotland, with Geneva, adopted the government which Calvin recommended. The Swiss persevered in that established by Zuinglius; and the churches of England and Ireland pursued with episcopacy a mixed regulation, subordinate to the parliamentary supremacy.

But the great point which distinguished this leader of the reformed churches, respected *the decrees* of God, and their consequences on the ever-

lasting state of men, as flowing from his own sovereign will and pleasure. Nothing that Calvin advanced spoke stronger, than Luther had previously maintained on the subject of predestination and grace ; the impotence of the human will to good ; and the utter corruption of our fallen nature. But after his decease, the Lutherans in general departed from the tenets of their great reformer, to the semi-pelagian system of *co-operation*. Against this, the Genevan apostle, ably seconded by his colleagues, Beza, Zanchius and others, strongly contended and supported the system, since called the Calvinistic, with such force of argument, that it was universally adopted through all the reformed churches, and became their discriminating feature ; and must continue so as long as the Helvetic confession, the catechism of Heidelberg, the decisions of the synod of Dort, the assembly's catechism, and the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, continue unrepealed. For, whatever change of sentiments may have been wrought at Geneva, in France, Holland, Germany, or Great Britain ; whilst these formularies continue the express bonds of union in the several churches, in which none can enter into holy orders, but by their solemn consent and approbation to the truths which these formulas of doctrine contain, so long whatever difference of sentiment may be entertained by individuals, ministers, or others, the majority or minority, none can be inferred in *the Church*, which remains forever such, as the articles of her faith declare. ,

The disputes occasioned by the opposition raised to these predestinarian sentiments, form a principal part of the history of the reformed churches : as in each of them they were attacked by men of the greatest acuteness and learning ; and as they present a revolting aspect in the view of every unhumbled conscience, and unenlightened mind, it was impossible, humanly speaking, but those very consequences should result, which we are about shortly to detail ; and which are equally singular and observable ; to wit—That for a long while past the majority of teachers and people in all the reformed churches, have been departing farther and farther from the free grace and predestinarian system ; and yet the original establishment of these doctrines, in their several formularies and confessions of faith, remains exactly as they were fixed from the beginning.

Switzerland, divided between Popish and Protestant cantons, hath continued since the days of Calvin, the same formula of doctrine and discipline.

France united herself with Geneva and her venerable fathers, Farel, and Beza ; who, after Calvin's decease, spread the truths he taught, with equal zeal and success ; but that unhappy country, torn with civil and religious feuds, suffered severely. The party of the reformed, and the Catholics, were not very unequally balanced, though the preponderance rested with the latter. Yet the Huguenots, a name given to the French Protestants, were numerous even at court, and among



the principal personages of the kingdom. The dreadful massacre of the Protestants on St. Bartholomew's day, A. N. 1572, which every tongue has execrated, kindled afresh the fires of dissention, hardly extinguished; and, through seas of blood, Henry of Navarre, the heir of the throne, contended for his birth-right against his popish and inveterate enemies. The great obstruction was his profession of the reformed religion. Honor long maintained the struggle, for conscience with such a man could have presented a feeble barrier. A change of religion seated him at last peaceably on the throne. Henry IV. surnamed *the Great*, was a man of intrepid valor, a consummate politician, and in his general manners esteemed as the most amiable of men; withal professedly a zealous Protestant; but, at the same time, the slave of appetite, and indulging his passions in such impurity and licentiousness, as disgraced the name of Christian. It little signified, indeed, to what church he belonged. His politic apostacy procured peace for the body which he deserted, as well as the throne for himself; and the edict of Nantz confirmed to the reformed the most ample toleration, with free admission to all places of honor and profit; and chambers of justice, where they enjoyed an equal number of assessors of their own profession. A third part of the kingdom at least had then embraced the reformed religion. A. N. 1598.

A. N. 1560. Knox, the famous Scotch reformer, and pupil of Calvin, brought from Geneva the

reformed sentiments and discipline, and after furious struggles, established them through Scotland.

England had long been preparing, before Luther or Calvin arose, for a reform ; and when first the separation was formed from the see of Rome, was in peculiar circumstances. During the life of Henry VIII. a man of violence, lawless in appetite, and destitute of all religion, England as a body, could not be properly said to have had any religious sentiments, or church established, when the despotic will of the monarch made what alterations he pleased, and sent to the flames or the scaffold, those who dared to question his supremacy, or to controvert his decisions. Cranmer, the friend of Calvin, and in opinion one with him, respecting doctrines, was high in the favour of this capricious and cruel monarch. By improving every offered occasion, and yielding, where he found opposition useless, though often exposed to the most imminent ruin, he endeavoured to avert all the evil, and do all the good which was in his power. But no sooner had death removed the tyrant, and placed the amiable Edward on the throne, AN. 1547, than the whole ecclesiastical establishment was modelled according to the reformed system, leaving the bishops and the discipline of the Church, nearly as they had been before. The abuses of popery were all removed, or at least it was designed they should be ; and England became a capital member of the Reformed Church. The excellent Peter Martyr, the intimate friend of Calvin, was invited over, and seated in the profes-

sor's chair at Oxford ; and both universities maintained with zealous attachment the doctrines termed Calvinistic, and which the thirty-nine articles confirmed, as the established profession of the kingdom. Geneva was avowed a sister Church, united in doctrine, though different in government and discipline ; and herein, by an express declaration of Calvin, bound to exercise mutual indulgence. AN. 1553. This flourishing period continued till the reign of Mary ; when many eminent ministers being martyred, the rest who escaped her bloody bishops, dispersed and fled into the foreign Protestant churches, and were received at Geneva with the most fraternal hospitality. When divine Providence, on the demise of Mary, placed Elizabeth on the throne, these persecuted exiles returned to the land of their nativity, restored to their charges, and exercising their ministry in the Church, from which they had been expelled ; but, during their absence, their habits of intimacy and acquaintance with Geneva and her divines, as well as of the other reformed churches, had raised scruples in their minds respecting the lawfulness of many rites continued in the Church of England ; and a wish to reduce that establishment to a conformity with the greater simplicity of the foreign reformed churches. The body of the dignified clergy was against the exiles ; many had conformed from popery, and wished to keep as near as possible to the Church which they had renounced, in hopes of another change ; but above all, the imperious Elizabeth, who had inherited an abundant portion of her father's tyrannical spirit,

held her supremacy with a jealous tenacity, and set her face against all innovations ; and though both her interest and inclination seemed to concur with her education, and to make her a determined Protestant, yet she had no objection to the exterior pomp of worship, and rather appeared willing to enlarge than curtail the ritual ceremonies. Nor did the strict and rigid manners of the exiles at all appear congenial to her spirit, which, with all her apparent zeal for the outward profession of the Protestant religion, seemed totally destitute of the power of it in her conscience and her conduct. Her imperious temper ; her feminine vanity ; her duplicity and cruelty to the Queen of Scots ; her profane swearing ; and a multitude of acts utterly inconsistent with the purity and gentleness of the religion of the Son of God, might be consistent with the character of a *great Queen*, but utterly incompatible with that of a *good Christian*.

• Far from conceding any thing to the wishes of those who began to obtain the name of *Puritan*, from the *purser worship* and *manners* which they professed to seek, the Queen published the *Act of Uniformity*, and enforced it with all the rigour of her authority. The Puritans, exasperated by a treatment, which, after their long and eminent sufferings, they thought they so little deserved, and so little expected, abstained not from sharp and bitter invectives against their oppressors ; and their obstinacy and their scrupulosity were often as extreme as the insolence and intolerance of their adversaries were blameable. The best, the

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gentlest, the most peaceable on both sides, were little heard amidst the passions of heated opponents ; neither party was disposed to yield ; and the breach daily widened. The refusal to grant a liberal toleration, and the determination to suppress the murmurs of the discontented, by the strong hand of power, rendered them only more inimical to government, and united among themselves, which otherwise they would not have been ; for, whilst the most violent laboured to overturn the whole ecclesiastical establishment, and to reduce it to their favourite Genevan model, the more moderate would have gladly accepted a few concessions, removing the most obnoxious grounds of their objection to the forms established ; of which the article of vestments, the sign of the cross in baptism, and some similar rites, made a formidable part ; for, as to *the doctrines*, they were perfectly consentient, and equally tenacious of them, perhaps more so than their adversaries. Nor were they as averse to the name of bishop or his superintendence, as to the pomp and wealth, and political engagements of the prelacy ; for as yet the English bishops claimed not their office by *divine right*, but *under the constitution of their country* ; nor pleaded for more than two orders of apostolic appointment, bishops and deacons. (See Burnet Reform. vol. 1. p. 324.)

AN. 1588. Bishop Bancroft widened the breach, by asserting in a sermon, preached at Paul's Cross, that bishops were a distinct order from priests,

and that by *divine right* ; and Archbishop Whitgift supported the assertion.

This tended farther to irritate, as the archbishop and his associates refused to consider any as invested with the ministerial character, who were not episcopally ordained ; and demanded of those, who had been set apart in the other reformed churches, to be re-ordained before they were permitted to minister in the Church of England : as if there could be no ministers, no sacraments, no ordinances, no church, without bishops, priests and deacons of episcopal ordination : and this as much offended the whole body of the reformed churches abroad, as it justly irritated the Puritans at home.

The cathedrals, their worship, and pomp, were peculiarly obnoxious to the Puritans, as were the dignitaries that occupied the stalls in them ; and as they desired to banish the pageantry of devotion, they also wished a greater purity of discipline ; and that all who were open offenders, or of dubious character, should be excluded from the communion of the faithful ; but that such exclusion from the table of the Lord, should not expose them to any civil or worldly incommodity, in reputation, person, or estate.

The high commission court, and its arbitrary inquisitorial proceedings, were strongly and justly objected to ; but such an engine was too congenial to the despotic temper of the monarch, not to be sure to meet her strenuous support.

Thus began those troubles in the Church, the fearful effects of which, the next generation peculiarly experienced ; where each equally blameable in their turn, abused their power in persecution ; and instead of liberty of conscience, and generous toleration, smote with the sword of the civil magistrate, all that refused to conform to their several exclusive establishments.

The conflicts of the contending parties I mean not to dwell upon. I can only just notice, that among the Puritans themselves, though united against the Church, much disunion prevailed ; while some would be content with less, and others claimed more reforms, a variety of sects commenced in embryo, which a future age hatched into life. Of these I shall only notice that denomination of dissenters which now first began to appear, and afterwards becoming so dominant under the protectorate, declined at the restoration, but at present seems greatly reviving.

AN. 1581. *The Independents* trace their most distinguished origin to Robert Brown, a man of abilities, who affected to form a purer church, on the apostolic model, than had yet existed. He consented to all the Calvinistic doctrines, alike at that day admitted by churchmen and Puritans ; but in ecclesiastical government, he suggested a new plan of *congregational churches*, of which antiquity had furnished no precedent, at least since the apostolic age : each separate and distinct—consisting of those only who worshipped in the same

place—exempt from all jurisdiction but of themselves—electing their own pastors—and dismissing them by the vote of a majority of members—admitting and expelling from their society in the same mode. Their *pastor* was distinguished neither by garb nor superiority from the rest; except his leading the devotions, ministering the sacraments, and addressing the congregation by appointment of the people. They permitted him not to minister baptism or the communion, except to those of his own society; yet did they not restrict the office of *teacher* to one, but admitted any member who offered and was approved by the church, to exhort and edify their brethren: withal highly intolerant, they refused all communion with every other society of Christians, formed upon a different model from their own. In many of these points the independents have been since more enlarged and liberal. Brown, after flying his country for his opposition to the governing powers, and attempting to form churches on the independent model in the Dutch provinces, returned to England, conformed to the church established; and is said to have finished his latter days at a church in Northamptonshire, in a manner disgraceful to any church. A part of one of the congregations which he quitted at Leyden, transported themselves to America, and founded at Boston the first independent society on that Continent.

Yet, amidst these disputes and contentions, respecting the forms of religion, a great and glorious number of living evidences of pure



Christianity appeared. Many of the writings which have reached us, witness the excellence of their authors, and the exemplariness of their conduct; and their zeal for their adorable Master's service, demonstrate, that the reformed churches in this land were then a praise in the earth. It is much to be lamented, that a greater spirit of meekness and mutual forbearance was not exercised by men, who, professing to unite in all the divine doctrines, and the holy influence of them, put an importance upon the ceremonials of religion, to which they seem so little entitled. The one side too intolerant and tenacious of authority, not disposed to admit reasonable claims, or to indulge conscientious scruples; the other, stiff and unbending, dissatisfied with any concessions or alterations, which came not up to the extent of their requisitions; and charging many of the bishops as tyrannical and anti-christian, who certainly meant to be neither; and will, by all impartial posterity, be reckoned among the excellent of the earth. The great Head of the Church hath long since judged both parties, and I doubt not, they are together praising him, who pitieth our infirmities, and pardoneth our iniquities. Certain it is, that many of the bishops of that day were laborious pastors, and edified the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, by their examples and preaching, as they did the whole church by their writings; and it is as certain, that many of those who dared not conform to the establishment, were ministers equally pious, learned, and exem-

plary, adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour by the purity of their lives, and greatly edified the little flocks which had been collected by their labours ; and notwithstanding the weight of authority against them, they continued rising in public estimation, and increasing the numbers of the dissatisfied. These were of two sorts, *State Puritans*, who wished to introduce a greater measure of civil liberty into the government, and were the *political chiefs*, who watched their opportunity to turn the discontents of their brethren to the accomplishment of their own designs. The others were *Church Puritans*, who desired no alterations in government, and would have acquiesced in the ecclesiastical establishment with some modifications, but wished a reduction of unnecessary ceremonies, and to separate the Church from political connections with the state ; so as to be less a worldly sanctuary, as to them it appeared. It was something observable, that the men among the conformists themselves, who neither objected to the forms or the government of the church, if they manifested peculiar zeal in preaching ; strictness of manners ; and abstained from the theatre, and what the world calls the innocent amusements of life ; they also received the brand of Puritanism, a circumstance highly favourable to the non-conforming party, as impressing an idea, that with them the greatest spirituality of conduct, and the power of godliness, was to be found, since all who shewed the most of this in their conversation, bore their reproach.

The holy lives, and the triumphant deaths of many of the men of that generation, are on record. Their flourishing congregations, and the attention paid to the ministry of those most faithful labourers, shew a relish for the truths which they preached, and a desire to be followers of such as through faith and patience inherited the promises. I hear them often branded as hypocrites, and their piety interpreted as outrageous and enthusiastic ; but I am not at all satisfied that those from whom the reproaches of this sort come, are the best judges of evangelical truth, or the noblest patterns of christian conversation. There were, no doubt, many hypocrites, and such, as under the cloak of religious appearance, had political ends in view ; but this will be only a farther proof of the fact, that a life of exemplary godliness was common, and highly respected ; and therefore demonstrates a general spread of *vital religion*\* among us in that day.

The UNITED PROVINCES, rescued from the tyrannical dominion of Philip, as well as emancipated from the Romish yoke, by many a hard fought battle, and persevering courage, began to breathe in established liberty, which defied the impotent malice of their enemies. The furnace of affliction always brightens the Church of God. AN. 1579. A great and faithful host of preachers

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\* I venture to use this phraseology, however much it hath been derided by infidels and scoffers ; and I do it on purpose to express my views of *true Christianity*, as a divine principle of life, implanted by the Spirit of God.

of the everlasting gospel arose, and the bands of religion strengthened them for every conflict. A golden god, and the spirit of commerce, with the wealth it produces, had not as yet extended its baneful influence over the men of that generation. They had started in the race vigorously ; and adopting the reformed system of doctrine, adorned it by a purity, sobriety, and temperance, that was distinguishing.

A great number of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren, joined by the persecuted followers of Huss, and driven by the Catholic clergy into Poland, united with the reformed churches. They had at first connected themselves with Luther and his associates, to whom they sent their confession of faith and discipline, and were not disapproved, though in many things different from the Lutheran. **AN. 1522.** But when they were expelled Bohemia, retaining their own discipline, they adopted the Calvinistic doctrine. I apprehend a branch still remained in Moravia and Bohemia, united with the Lutherans, from whom the present Moravian brethren are descended ; who, in doctrine, approach much nearer the Lutheran confession than the Helvetic, though in their church government they have retained episcopacy, and peculiarities very distinguishing. If their ancestors were as excellent as many of that denomination in the present day, we must reckon them among the living members of the real Church of the redeemed.

The Poles, from them, and other Germans, received the true evangelical religion : and Bohe-

mians, Lutherans, and Swiss, confederated to defend themselves; exercising towards each other mutual indulgence, and bearing the name of *United Brethren*.

Many of the German principalities, Hanau, Nassau, Isengberg, and others, towards the end of this century, joined the reformed churches; and the progress of Calvinism in Denmark was considerable, though the dominant religion continued Lutheran.

It may not be improper to close the account of the reformed Church, with some strictures on the character of that eminent personage, who was so highly distinguished in his day, and has ministered so much matter of admiration to his friends, and obloquy to his enemies.

CALVIN was a native of Noyon, in Picardy; his mental powers were great; his diligence indefatigable; his erudition equal to the first of that age; his eloquence was manly; his style perspicuous, and admirably pure; as a minister of the sanctuary, as a professor of divinity, his labours were immense. Yet, in the zenith of his power, his income amounted only to twenty-five pounds a year; and he refused the increase of stipend which was offered him by the magistracy, chusing rather to give an example of disinterestedness to his successors. His morals were strictly exemplary; his piety fervent; his zeal against offenders in doctrine or manners, rigid. He had much opposition to encounter, but he subdued it by perseve-

ring ardor, and dignity of conduct. His influence at Geneva was vast, and he was looked up to by the reformed in general, as their oracle. Every where his name was mentioned with reverence. Tenacious in point of doctrine, he met an host of opponents, who rejected the system of unconditional decrees. Controversy sharpened his spirit, and he is accused of abusing his power and influence in acts of oppression towards his adversaries. The sufferings of Gruet, Bolsac, Castalio, Ochinus, but particularly of the ever remembered Servetus, put to death by the Genevan magistrates for his Socinian and infidel opinions, have brought an odium on Calvin's name, as having instigated them to such acts of violence ; at least not having exerted the authority which he was known to possess, to prevent the shedding of blood ; and if this were a just charge, let the reproach rest upon him.

However dangerous such opinions may be supposed to the peace of society, or the souls of men, many now doubt the right of any penal inflictions for them ; and much more the justice of putting any man to death on that account, however impious or atheistical he may be. But, in truth, the rights of conscience were as little understood in that day among the Protestants as among the Papists ; and obstinate heresy, or daring blasphemy, supposed to deserve the most condign punishment, and adjudged to prison and to death.

Far from attempting to justify these severities, I etseem this as the foulest blot in Calvin's other-

wise fair escutcheon ; nor do I think the spirit of the times any exculpation for violating the plainest dictates of the word of God and common sense, that “ liberty of conscience, and private judgment, are every man’s birth right ;” and where nothing immoral, or tending by some overt act to disturb the peace of society appears, there all punishment for matters of opinion must be utterly unchristian and unjustifiable.

Calvin’s advice to the English Puritans, respecting conformity, was singularly conciliatory. He wished them in all matters of indifference to submit ; and where they could not, to give as little offence as possible. Supposing, with the wisest part of the reformed Church, that “ Jesus Christ having left no express directions respecting ecclesiastical government, every nation might establish the form most agreeable to itself, provided nothing was enjoined contrary to the word of God.” That he was a great man his enemies will not deny—that he was a good man, they who knew him best, bore the most unimpeachable witness :—and what none dare dispute, those who were the most distinguished in every Protestant country, for learning and piety, courted his acquaintance, and gloried in his friendship : than which, perhaps a more unequivocal proof cannot be produced of human excellence.

The reformed Church exhibited a constellation of worthies, many of whom have been mentioned, and more are omitted, whose writings demonstrate

their deep erudition, and theological knowledge ; and, who are still consulted for their critical skill, as well as for practical improvement. Their system was to open the word of God, as the fountain of wisdom, admitting nothing to be taught, as divine truth, but what was clearly deducible from thence ; avoiding all far-fetched interpretations, and scholastic subtilties. And on this basis of the pure word of God alone, have the reformed churches been erected ; and amidst the deplorable apostacy from all religion, subsist in vigor to the present day.

### 3d. THE HETERODOX CHURCH.

A THIRD body of Protestants, who are formed into Church order, and profess Christianity, I have ventured without meaning any reproach, to class under the title of HETERODOX ; as they differed so essentially and fundamentally from the rest of the reformed. These rose up under several names and forms ; to the chief of which I shall shortly advert, and their history.

It was hardly possible, when the spirit of reformation, after years of darkness, invited to the perusal of the Scriptures, and to the most unlimited freedom of enquiry into their contents, that a diversity of sentiments should not arise among the learned ; from whom, and their conceit of superior intelligence, all heresies have usually commenced. Of the multitudes, therefore, of those, who rose



up in opposition to the popish abuses, some pushed their objections even to the bible itself; and rejected, as we have seen, revelation, and the very being of a God. The old heresies of Arian and Pelagian origin, revived; and various shades of degradation of Christ's divinity, brought him down from essential godhead to the lowest state of humanity, in the system called **SOCINIANISM**: unless we shall admit the modern Unitarians to a lower step; who with the *Davidists*, a sect in Transylvania, refused every address, or honor of mediation, to Jesus Christ. Indeed the gradations scarcely deserve consideration, as the difference between the true God and no God, is such, as hardly to admit of any thing intermediate. This sect appears to derive its origin from Italy; and its name from Faustus Socinus; and to have spread among a few individuals of considerable literature; but not to have been moulded into form, and an establishment, till it visited Poland; where, after some vicissitudes, the city of Racow, in the palatinate of Sendomir, became the seminary and metropolitan seat of this heresy, and the Racovian catechism their confession of faith, A.D. 1574. The leading principle of the sect appears to be, that "whatever surpasses the limits of human comprehension is to be excluded from the Christian profession." The mystery of the Trinity—the incarnation of the Son of God—and the deity of the Spirit—are, therefore, consequently, utterly renounced in their creed. Respecting the article of baptism, they admitted only adults; and re-baptised those who joined

them from other communions. They were considerably divided among themselves ; and though they made many zealous efforts from Racow, to spread their tenets into other countries, they met with very little success, being every where watched with a jealous eye, and often punished by both Lutherans and Calvinists, as well as committed to the inquisition, under the Roman pale.

It is observable that some of the most zealous disciples of Socinianism were physicians, as Servetus, whose fate is well known ; and whose turbulent spirit brought him to his untimely end, inexcusable as the instruments were who imbrued their hands in his blood.

AN. 1563. Blandrata, another physician, sent into Transylvania at the request of Prince Sigismund, laboured with equal zeal and more success ; and with his associates spread their opinions, and procured a peaceable establishment, and open profession of their faith there, to this day. Though their numbers have not been great in any place, they have maintained an existence, and in the declensions of pure Christianity, have gained proselytes in countries into which at first they found no admission—as in England, where an effort, though with no great success, has been made to revive the Unitarian and Socinian notions with some deviations from their original. The indifference to all religion, has permitted them peaceably to exist ; at the same time, that it hath been unfavourable to their progress ; as these opinions suit not the

multitude, and the few who chuse to be free-thinkers, and treat revelation cavalierly, rather prefer to make no profession of Christianity at all.

The peaceableness of the Socinian principles, which in their most ancient catechism, forbade oaths, or the resistance of injury or oppression, made them much less observable than the sect of the *Anabaptists*, with which they were often classed, because of their coincidence in the point of baptism, however different in other particulars. These last indeed excited the greatest disturbances, required the strong arm of power to subdue them, and brought upon themselves the heaviest censures of the reformed, whether Lutherans or Calvinists.

Amidst the agitations of those days, arose this sect; presuming to found a new Church, in which every member should be a true and real saint; and their leaders, under a sure divine impulse, and armed with miraculous powers against all opposition. Under Muntzer, Stubner Stork, and John of Leyden, a tumultuous multitude declared war against all magistracy, and proposed to erect a new *christocracy*, in which they expected the Saviour himself personally to appear, and to rule the nations by them and their followers. The first inundation was swept away as above recorded, and the leaders destroyed. But the sect subsisted, and continued to disseminate the same hopes, and to make the same pretensions. Not that all who were included in the name, were alike turbulent in

their principles, or fanatic in their expectations. Many of them appear to be persons of real piety, seduced by the hope of a purer and better state of the Christian Church ; and only held in common with the rest, the necessity of adult baptism, by immersion. The different countries where they spread, concurred in exerting every means of suppressing them ; and abstained not from cruelties, which disgraced the Christian name ; and which, as hath been often proved, the constancy and intrepidity of the sufferers, braving the savageness of their persecutors, turned to the credit and advancement of their cause. The magistrate absurdly involved all who bore the name of Anabaptist in the same criminality ; however harmless the visionary hopes of many were, compared with the errors and turbulence of others. And because an *incurable heretic* in the eye of a protestant, as well as a papist, was still an object for the sword and coercion of the established government, they suffered severely ; so inadequately was true Christian liberty yet understood,

On the destruction of Munster, with its taylor king, and the dispersion of those who escaped the fury of their enemies, the fugitives persecuted in every place, were reduced very low, and saw the extinction of their sect approaching ; when Menno, a Frieslander, (AN. 1536) who had been a popish priest, and, as he owns, a notoriously wicked man, was, by frequenting their assembly, reclaimed ; and, being a person of singular abilities, joined the society, and became their chief. His indefat-

igable labours from Holland to Livonia, amidst innumerable dangers, greatly increased the number of his followers. The gentleness of his spirit, the piety of his conduct, the power of his preaching, and his unwearied zeal, gave weight to his advice. His wisdom also removed the most objectionable parts of the Anabaptist tenets, and moulded them into a consistence, far less offensive to the rest of their Christian brethren. He retained still some of the particular doctrines of the sect, respecting baptism—the millenium—the unlawfulness of war—and of oaths—and the exclusion of all magistracy from their communion—but he condemned all their past turbulence, polygamy, and pretences to inspiration : recommending the greatest peaceableness of conduct, even to non-resistance, and the strictest purity of morals, without which none were to be admitted, or abide in their communion. Under so prudent a leader, the society established order, and obtained respectability. Divisions among themselves indeed greatly weakened their cause ; which all Menno's prudence could not appease. A rigid sect arose, affecting peculiar strictness of discipline, and hurling excommunications against their brethren on the slightest occasions. This produced a separation into the rigid and moderate Anabaptists, and endless debates of too little consequence to dwell upon.

In Holland, under that great friend of liberty, William Prince of Orange, they obtained a peaceable settlement, and liberty of conscience ; having

generously assisted him with money in a great emergence. From thence they are supposed to have migrated to England. But those who have settled with us, differ still much from the ancient and modern Mennonites ; and more among themselves ; for holding as the distinguishing feature of their party, the article of baptism, nothing can be more remote from each other than the *general* baptists, who have embraced the Arminian tenets, and the *particular* Baptists, who strongly adhere to those of Calvin, and the reformed churches. And of these latter, a great difference remains betwixt those who admit mixed communion, and those who refuse it to any but their own peculiar sect. A few also observe the Jewish sabbath, as their day of worship, in preference to the Lord's-day, and are termed *Seventh day Baptists*.

When I have ranked the first Anabaptists under the head of heterodox, with their fanatical opinions ; I wish by no means to be understood as comprehending the Mennonites, or modern congregations of Baptists, on any line with the Socinian and Arian heresy ; far otherwise. After Menno had purged this denomination from the most exceptionable tenets, I have no doubt, that many of his followers and himself, deserve a name in the Church of the living God, and were as true and real members of Christ's body, as the excellent in the reformed and Lutheran churches. And whoever candidly weighs their doctrines and practices in the present day, must allot them a place among the faithful, as a general body, not-

withstanding their tenaciousness on the point of baptism. Indeed, in all other things they seem very nearly united with their reformed brethren, respecting the fundamental articles of the Christian faith : are exemplary in their zeal to promote the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ ; and exhibit respectable specimens of those who walk so, as we have Christ for an example. Through the weakness of our intellect, and the infirmity of the flesh, it is not the lot of mortals to be of one mind, nor of real Christians to form a complete system of unity of opinion. But one thing *they* desire to do, to hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace ; and to be of one heart, where they are not perfectly joined in the same sentiments. And though they occupy separate communions, and assemble not in the same places, or with the same forms of worship, yet all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, ~~w~~ love one another out of a pure heart fervently. In a better world we shall be still more closely united, and be one fold under one shepherd. How should this prospect and hope mortify the spirit of prejudice and bigotry in every heart, and lead us to greater enlargement and mutual forbearance !

## CENTURY XVII.

## CHAPTER I.

## PROGRESS OF THE EXTERNAL CHURCH.

**A**FTER ages of gloomy superstition, the reign of ignorance, and primeval night, we have seen the sun of righteousness rising with healing in his wings, to dispel the darkness, and illumine the path, which alone can lead the faithful to the light of eternal day.

The struggle in Europe, between truth and error, had been long and obstinate ; and, however blessed the issue, the effects of the contest were greatly to be deplored, as having produced wars, which desolated the face of many countries, and conflicts in all the lands of Christendom ; sometimes as fatal to the persecutors, as to the persecuted.

The combatants now had in a sort rested on their arms, and precluded, by the peace of Augsburg, from attempting any considerable inroads on each other's territories by violence, the Catholics and Protestants began to plan how they might extend their influence over the regions which had been lately discovered. The former, especially,



hoped thereby to recover some indemnity in the new Continent, for their losses in the old.

Herein, indeed, the Catholics possessed a great and manifest advantage, not only as united under one spiritual head, but also because the grand discoveries had been made by those who professed the faith of Rome, and continued under her obedience. These all equally wished with the popes themselves, to propagate their own religion, and thus confirm a surer and safer dominion over those whom they had brought under the yoke, or hoped by monkish auxiliaries more easily to subdue. Nothing could more exactly concur with the ambitious views of the papal see. A host of missionaries rushed into the battle, zealously disposed to spread the knowledge of such Christianity as they held, through all the countries into which the arms or commerce of Spain and Portugal had penetrated. We have seen the institution of Jesuits expressly devoted to this object: nor were the other orders, roused by their zeal and emulation, behind them in the work.

To direct their efforts most effectually for spreading the popish religion, and bringing the subjected nations, and others, within her pale, was among the most important objects of the Church of Rome. With this view, the Pope established a congregation of Cardinals, *de propaganda fide*, whose name expressed their office. AN. 1622. To defray every expence, a vast endowment, successively increased, furnished the most ample means. The missiona-

ries were educated, conveyed, and supplied with every necessary. Seminaries were established for such heathen converts as should be sent to Europe from the different nations. Books were printed in all languages for the use of the missions. A provision was made for erecting schools, and affording the poor assistance, whether by medicine, or under any temporal want. In short, every thing which could forward the missions, was liberally supplied, AN. 1663. France copied the example of Rome, and formed an establishment for the same purposes. Regiments of friars, black, white, and grey, were ready for embarkation, however distant the voyage, or perilous the service.

The Jesuits claimed the first rank, as due to their zeal, learning, and devotedness to the holy see. The Dominicans, Franciscans, and other orders, disputed the palm with them; and jealous of their superiority, as is the case usually betwixt rivals for fame, they impeached the purity of their motives; imputed their zeal to ambitious purposes; and accused them of subjecting their converts to their own order, with a view to make merchandise of them. Into these accusations probably much truth entered, but more envy. Indeed, the religion which any of these taught, was almost, if not altogether, as far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ, as the paganism from which the converts were drawn. From the commencement of the missions, the congregation of cardinals has been employed in hearing and examining innumerable memorials and criminations against the Jesuits,

the most grievous and disgraceful to the Christian name. I confess, after considering the accusations, and the avowed principle of popery, "That every fraud and artifice is pious, that tends to promote the interests of the Romish Church," the Jesuits seem fully vindicated. Admitting this allowed principle, they acted wisely. None can refuse them the praise of indefatigable labour; and little doubt can be entertained, that the issue of their missionary efforts would have been very different from what has happened, if they had not been so often checked in their career; their fidelity to the several states, under whose patronage they acted, rendered suspicious; and their devotedness to the see of Rome itself, questioned. Their rivals insinuated, that they meant only the glory, riches, and increase of their own order; and sacrificed to these every other consideration. Whether this was really the case or not, their steps appear directed with the most consummate skill, and crowned with astonishing success. They studied the characters of those with whom they had to do, and suited themselves alike to the peasant as the noble. They selected from their society, the instruments best qualified for their several spheres of action. They were physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, painters, musicians, artists, in every occupation, that could render their talents subservient to missionary purposes. Their gentle and insinuating manners gained the confidence of the natives where they resided. They made themselves agreeable as useful to the superior ranks; they condescended to instruct the meanest; they consulted the differ-

ent inclinations and habits of the several nations, and the individuals of each. In short, they determined to become all things to all men, that they might obtain the great object in their view. The new world, and the Asiatic regions, were the chief field of their labours. They penetrated into the uncultivated recesses of America; civilized the savages, and won them to habits of industry. They visited the untried regions of Siam Tonkin, and Cochin-china. They entered the vast empire of China itself; insinuated themselves into the confidence of that suspicious people, and numbered millions among their converts. They dared affront the dangers of the tyrannical government of Japan, and even there extended their conquests in a manner almost incredible. In India they assumed the garb and austerities of the Brahmins; and boasted on the coasts of Malabar of a thousand converts baptized in one year by a single missionary. They could alike familiarise themselves with the magnificence and luxury of the court of Peking, or live on water and vegetables, like the Jogis; and whatever their adversaries may object to the looseness of their moral system, the conduct of the missionaries was unimpeachable; otherwise they had neither attracted or preserved the veneration of their disciples—if they admitted of relaxation, it was for them, and not for themselves.

That their sufferings were great, as their labours were successful, we have the most authentic evidence. The dreadful massacres in China and Japan, proved them sincere; and at least, as true Catholics as any at Rome or elsewhere.

Respecting the two great points laid to their charge, of endeavouring to reconcile the Christian God and the Christian doctrine to the prejudices of the disciples of Confucius, much may be said in their vindication.

1st. With regard to the name of *God*. The use of the word *Tien*, which communicated the idea of Deity to a Chinese, might surely be adopted without offence ; and, if explained, be equally proper as any other term of the Hebrew or Greek language.

2d. With regard to the *rites*, and offerings paid to their departed ancestors, something more objectionable may be found. To us, who are no Papists, it must appear equally indifferent, whether the respect be paid to Confucius or a great-grandfather, or to St. Januarius, or St. Crispin. And if these rites were only respectful memorials, and no idolatrous worship meant or offered, perhaps as much or more might be pleaded for them than for any European saints, many of whom are the creatures of imagination, and never had an existence.

I wonder not that those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, should object to have priests of other orders sent from France and Italy, to preside over, and direct the missions which their labours had established, and count themselves insulted by such interference : and more than this, from the purest motives, they might justly apprehend that the work itself would suffer by such intrusion.

But, I may not enter farther into these injudicious quarrels ; suffice it only to observe, that their effects were fatal to the missionary work. The disputes among the missionaries affected their converts, and every where produced contentions. The jealousy of the governments was roused. A dreadful persecution arose in Japan. The teachers, as well as the disciples, fell victims to the fury and suspicion of that savage people ; and the name of Christian there, is no more had in remembrance but to abhor it. AN. 1615.

In China, a flourishing æra gave brighter hopes of perpetuity, but they too were blasted. The same effects produced the same calamities ; and, though the present century left the Jesuits possessed of a noble church at Pekin, within the imperial precincts, and their missionaries spread through all that country, and the Mongal Tartary, the next saw them utterly expelled the empire, with great carnage, and sunk, never to rise up again.

This jealousy of the Jesuits, and the final prevalence of their enemies, leading at last to the suppression of their order in the next century, has proved eventually the most fatal blow to the authority of Rome, and led almost to the extinction of all missionary labours among the Papists ; an event which every Protestant will rather consider as auspicious than afflictive.

In Africa, where the Portuguese power prevailed, the Capuchins were chiefly employed, less artful and able indeed than the disciples of Loyola,

but equally zealous. They relate the wonders wrought by their ministry at Benin, Soffala, and the West and Southern coasts of Africa: but those who have seen these negro Christians, the Catholics themselves being judges, will with difficulty admit them to a place in the Church of Christ. Though they have been baptised, and learned to make the sign of the cross, in all the essentials of Christianity, whether of doctrine or practice, they differ little from their countrymen. It is among the awful scenes, viewed with anguish by every real Christian, that so immense a region of the globe should be left to this day sunk in Pagan and Mahomedan darkness, and lying in the shadow of death, and no efforts made to pluck the brands from the burning.

Not much more can be said for all the Catholic conversions made from Mexico to the Straits of Magellan. There, Spaniards and Portuguese are alike buried in ignorance, superstition and profligacy, even below their bigotted countrymen in Europe. With such examples and such instructors, the state of the poor natives may be well imagined; immersed in their ancient superstitions, they have added all the ceremonies and follies of their new religion, to the absurdities of the old.

Yet let it be remembered, that however Jesuits or Capuchins may be despised or condemned by Protestants, their conduct is to us highly reproachful. That we, who vaunt a purer Christianity, and have so many nobler motives to animate our zeal, have been hitherto so backward in the work of

heathen missions, so indifferent about enlarging the borders of Immanuel's kingdom, and so cold in our love towards the souls purchased by his most precious blood, must be confessed our guilt and shame, and can neither be too deeply lamented, or too soon amended.

Among the Protestants, it must be owned, the efforts to spread the gospel in the heathen world were few and feeble. A zealous Lutheran, Ernest, Baron of Wells, felt for the honor of his profession, and for the glory of the Lord, and sought to form a society for a Protestant mission ; but a variety of impediments disappointed his purposes, and no effectual benefit resulted from the attempt.

The two great nations of English and Dutch were too much engrossed with their commercial concerns to take religion into their view, and utterly neglected this great object. Such a scheme, indeed, was formed under Charles I. and a society appointed under the sanction of parliament for this purpose, AN. 1647 : but the confusions which followed, prevented any considerable efforts being made during the civil wars. And zealous as Cromwell professed himself for Christianity, he was too much taken up in securing his precarious dominion at home, to extend his concern to the heathen abroad. At the restoration of Charles II. the society was re-established, but the temper of that reign was little missionary—the project languished in luke-warmness. All that can be called missionary labour at that time, must be ascribed to the



Puritans and Non-conformists, who fled to America to escape the persecutions of government at home. Some of these men of God distinguished their zeal in labours among the poor Indians, which were crowned with tokens of divine favour. AN. 1639. The names of Brainerd, Mayhew, and Shephard, deserve to be had in remembrance : and, above all, the excellent Elliot, called the Apostle of the Indians, a title merited by his indefatigable labours, and signal success among them ; and more especially by his translation of the Scriptures into their language, and thus enabling them to read and understand the oracles of God. These attempts in America roused the attention of many at home ; and another society, noble in its institution, was formed for *promoting Christian knowledge*. I wish I could report the mighty effects, and the zealous labours of the missionaries sent forth under their auspices. Some good, however, has been done in India, and elsewhere, and particularly in the immense number of bibles and religious tracts, which have been dispersed through all parts of the British dominions ; and never can the word of God be perused without being the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

I would mention the efforts of the Dutch<sup>r</sup>, if I could trace the brightness of the Gospel glory rising under their patronage. The Independents from Leyden, indeed, emigrated to the Dutch colony in North America, and were among the first harbingers of gospel day ; and in all their settlements the reformed religion was set up ; though

I find no record of considerable success in the conversion of the heathen. In Ceylon, indeed, and on the coast of Malabar, some traces of missionary labours remain. I may not conceal that in Japan, it is said, they hold the only spot which Europeans are permitted to enter, and that purchased for commercial purposes, by denying that they are Christians, and trampling on the cross : but I shall not, for the honour of the Batavian nation, easily adopt so infamous a report. It is to be lamented, that vast as their commerce, and extensive as their foreign settlements have been, no vigorous missionary efforts have yet been made, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the countries which Providence placed under their yoke, or brought into connection with them : but my business is to record what hath been done, rather than to blame what hath been neglected.

The amazing progress in all scientific attainments, peculiarly marks this age ; never, perhaps, before was such a constellation of sages seen upon this stage of earth, who carried philosophy to its highest pitch. From the great Bacon, Lord Verulam, who led the way at the commencement of this æra, to the greater Sir Isaac Newton, supposed justly to be the first of human beings for intellect, discoveries, and extent of knowledge. England claims, and justly, the first place in the temple of literary fame. But other nations boast also their productions ; Italy her Galileo, France her Gassendi and Descartes, Germany her Leibnitz, and Denmark her Tycho Brahe, with a thousand other names of eminence, who eclipsed all those who

had preceded them in mathematics, astronomy and natural philosophy; and indeed, in most other branches of knowledge, physic, chymistry, history, physiology, and every kind of literature, sacred or profane. In every nation the language became more polished, and the writers as elegant in their expressions, as deep in their researches. But these I must pass hastily over, as the more immediate subject of the Church of Christ will furnish abundant matter.

Yet it must not be forgotten, that amidst this vast accession to the stock of human knowledge, many reputed geniuses arose, whose fame (or shall I rather say infamy) was built upon the most daring attacks on revelation, or the most insidious attempts to undermine it. To philosophise above what is written, and for vain man to affect to be wiser than God, is too correspondent with his fallen nature, ready to abuse the noblest faculties to the most perverse purposes. Of these, whilst France furnished her Vanini, and Holland the Jew Spinoza, England exhibited, with a general profligacy of manners, under Charles II. some of the most impious writers, and the most infidel, who took abundant pains to disseminate their deistical and atheistical tenets, and to embolden in his wickedness, the fool who had said (or at least hoped) in his heart, that there is no God. Such were Hobbes, Toland, and the Lords Herbert, Rochester, and Shaftesbury, who endeavoured, partly by reasoning, partly by ridicule, to overturn the faith of the unstable professor, or to

harden the hearts of the profligate. Many, indeed, instantly arose to lift up the shield against the fiery darts of the wicked ; and that great and able Robert Boyle, who is said to have always read the Scripture on his knees, zealous for divine truth, as eminent in philosophical discoveries, instituted a constant annual course of lectures, in defence of that religion, which these sceptical philosophers endeavoured to supplant and destroy. Let it be however particularly noted, that the great luminaries of the age, were the strenuous defenders of divine revelation. Newton, Locke, Boyle, Maclaurin, and others, alike distinguished for science, gloried in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not that the faith of the gospel stands in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

The general state of the Church will be seen, as we pass in review the several members of which it was composed ; the Papists, the Greeks, and the Protestants ; the latter of which will more especially engage our attention, as in the others little else will be found than darkness, and the shadow of death.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE CHURCH OF ROME.

**T**HE indignant pontiffs beheld the loss of their flocks, and the defalcation of their revenues ; and deep in their hearts meditated the means of their recovery, and of vengeance on their enemies. The peace of Augsburg had bound up the arm of violence from persecution, and every where proclaimed peace and tolerance among the contending princes. But peace was torment to the Romish prelates, and tolerance, of all imaginary evils, the most intolerable, and treason against the majesty of those anathemas which they had hurled against all heretics. The first object, therefore, of Rome, and of those who filled the papal chair, was to break this bond of union ; to rouse the Catholic princes to fresh acts of oppression in their own dominions, and to renewed attempts, to bring back to the house of their prison, those who had emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage.

This was the uniform pursuit and spirit of all the successive pontiffs ; and they employed the most powerful engines of craft and cruelty to effect their purposes. The history of one will be nearly the history of all ; though some were men of a more learned cast ; others more daringly flagitious and profligate in their manners ; and here and there

a gentle spirit, covered with an honest blush, that confessed guilt ; and heaved a suppressed sigh for reformation, which the state of popery was too inveterately rooted in evil to admit. I shall not therefore, particularize, but pursue the steps which marked the designs of the pontifical chair, leaving those who have done justice to them severally, to brand with infamy the impurities, and open profligacy of Innocent X. the most criminal of men ; and to adorn the memory of the ingenuous Odescalchi, Innocent XI. who sought in vain to cleanse the Augean stable.

As the object was to recover their lost power, wealth and dominion, the means they possessed unfortunately were but too well suited to the end. The House of Austria, with the other Catholic princes, the devoted partisans of the holy see, were especially courted. To these they looked for an arm of flesh and persecution ; and endeavoured to rouse them to recover their past influence, by breaking the peace of Augsburg, and bruising under the rod of oppression, those whom they had bound themselves to protect and tolerate.

Another, and yet more powerful engine, was found in the wily, insinuating, restless, and indefatigable order of Jesuits ; the firmest supporters of the holy see, and its most zealous as well as able satellites. These were dispersed through all lands, and seized every opportunity to pervert the ignorant, or oppress the feeble. In the courts of princes, whose confessors they chiefly were, the laxity of their moral system recommended their prescrip-

tions for quieting guilty consciences ; and one commutation was always sure to be suggested, as covering a multitude of sins ; and this as easy to perform, as flattering to human pride and superstition. Zeal for the conversion of heretics, and the employment of any means to effect it, however savage or contrary to the most solemn engagements, cancelled all crimes.

The pens of these artful and perfidious casuists were first employed to prove the nullity of the peace of Augsburg, and to charge upon the Protestants various pretended infractions, in order to justify the attack meditated against them.

The House of Austria, gained by the popes and these jesuitical directors of their consciences, began with the violation of the treaty in their own hereditary dominions. They endeavoured to prevail upon the Protestants to return to the Romish pale, by caresses, promises, the wiles of controversy, and the ingenuity of fraud ; in all which, these new apostles were employed with much success. To bend the stubborn, and to subdue the daring, innumerable acts of oppression were exercised ; and where the law was suborned to colleague with power, redress was sought in vain. The Protestants had no choice but to submit or fly their country.

Bohemia next experienced the arm of popish tyranny. Despair drove the Bohemians to resistance, and to wreak on their persecutors vengeance for the wrongs they had received. And here hu-

manity bleeds, and Christianity groans, over the miseries inseparable from civil war. On the death of the Emperor Mathias, (AN. 1619.) the Bohemians resolved to chuse a king of their own faith, and to preserve their civil and religious liberties against the all-grasping arm of Austria. For this purpose they offered their crown to the illustrious elector Palatine, a Protestant, and son-in-law to the King of England ; hoping to strengthen themselves greatly by such an election. In an unfortunate hour Frederic accepted the crown, and prepared to defend himself and his new subjects against the claims and arms of Ferdinand of Austria. The issue of this conflict was the most afflictive. Frederic not only lost his crown and kingdom, but his own electorate. The imperial arms triumphed ; and, what rendered this more grievous, it was in a great measure owing to the baseness of John, elector of Saxony, who helped on the destruction of Frederic and his brethren ; whether moved by envy at his elevation, or by prejudice against him as a Calvinist. The ruin of the poor protestants followed in Bohemia, and the palatinate, and they groaned under every oppression that abused power could inflict, and religious bigotry suggest ; meanwhile our wretched and pusillanimous James I. looked tamely on, nor moved a finger to support his worthy son, or the sinking cause of the reformed religion.

TILLY, the imperial general, now reigned without opponent, and Rome began again to number Germany among the countries of her obedience.



The Protestants, unable to make head against their conquerors, maintained a precarious tenure in their own dominions ; and every day proclaimed the approaching despotic power of the Emperor, and the subjugation of the Lutherans, and of all who had deserted the popish pale. Rome exulted in her prospects, and the Jesuits redoubled their efforts in the conquered countries, to seduce the vanquished to make their peace with the conquerors by a change of their religion.

The Emperor, boundless in his ambition, as enslaved to popery, now cast off the mask ; and in direct breach of the *peace of Augsburg*, instigated by the jesuitical emissaries of Rome, issued an edict for the restoration of all that had been taken from the Church, in virtue of the former treaty. A.D. 1629. Whatever priests and monks chose to claim, the imperial soldiers were at hand to seize ; and resistance was vain, where tyranny perverted the law against the Protestant possessor. The cries of the oppressed were loud. The wise and considerate of the papists themselves supported the complaints which reached the imperial throne, and remonstrated, that the inevitable consequence would be to rouse the Bohemians by despair to resistance, and to leave the country ravaged, ruined, and destitute of inhabitants. But the savage bigot Ferdinand, replied, *malum us regnum vastatum, quam damnatum*.—" I had rather see the kingdom a desert, than damned." Terror and dismay spread over the remaining princes. The Protestant cause was reduced to the lowest ebb ; its final overthrow

in the empire seemed inevitable and approaching. But God in wrath remembered mercy ; and though he thus punished their declensions, he would not wholly give them over for a prey to the teeth of their enemies.

AN. 1630. The magnanimous King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, heard the groans of his brethren with anguish. He saw the courage of the few remaining Lutheran princes quelled by fear ; or their arm palsied by mean attention to their own interest, and base hope of profiting by the spoils of others ; though like the companions of Ulysses, Saxony, the chief, could only expect to be last devoured. He resolved to rescue them from oppression or perish in the attempt. The court of France, jealous of the Emperor's overgrown power, instigated Gustavus to the enterprise, and promised him assistance. He knew he should find also friends among the timid, when they dared to declare themselves, and were sure that help was at hand. He boldly, therefore, drew the sword, and with a small but chosen army, crossed the sea, and landed in Germany to maintain the liberty of his brethren, and check the encroachments of Austria and Rome. The issue is well known—Victory crowned the hero. The insolent pride of Ferdinand was humbled ; his generals defeated. And though the King of Sweden fell at Letzen, at the head of his chosen band, on the bosom of victory, his death arrested not the vigour of the Swedes. The generals who succeeded Gustavus maintained their superiority ; till worn

out with a war of thirty years of misery, all parties became disposed to heal the wounds which bled throughout this unhappy country, by the peace of Westphalia, A.D. 1645. In vain the Pope and the Jesuits endeavoured to put every obstacle in the way of its conclusion. Necessity obliged both parties to compromise their differences. The Emperor indeed refused to grant their former liberty to the Protestants in Austria and Bohemia, or to restore the Palatinate ; yet all the other claims of the Protestants were solemnly admitted and guaranteed. The restitution edict was revoked ; and the Protestant and Reformed interest settled on a basis not easily to be shaken.

The dragon gnashed with vexation at seeing his prey thus escape ; and set himself to provide new means, and to plot new wiles for the seduction of those, whom he found himself unable to subdue. Nor were these without considerable effect. As open violence was restrained, the Jesuits and crafty prelates endeavoured under pretence of reconciling, to soften down the grosser features of popery, and to give them a more inoffensive aspect. They professed a willingness to grant almost any indulgencies to the scrupulous, only that they should return to the bosom of the Romish church, and heal the schism ; for this end conferences were held, disputations on the points of controversy managed with greater mildness and dexterity ; every winning artifice was employed, and every tempting offer made, which could either surprise

the conscience of the doubtful and ill-informed, or tempt the worldly-minded.

But these arts, through the watchfulness of the Protestants, were in a measure disappointed. The Germans chose to preserve their own liberty and religious profession. Yet a Christina, Queen of Sweden, was perverted, quitted her country and died at Rome : a woman of no semblance of religion. A Marquis of Brandenburgh ; a Count Palatine ; a Duke of Brunswick ; and a King of Poland, who procured a crown by his apostacy ; these, with several men of learning and name, also joined the popish communion. Indeed the zeal for making converts among the Romanists, met with little of equal activity among the Protestants. The fire of the reformation was damped ; a spirit of formality and security grew upon them ; and the number of those whose hearts were delivered from the dominion of the leading errors of popery was not so great as the general profession seemed to signify. An unawakened conscience, and the bias to lean on our own wisdom and doings for salvation, left many, and of the wise and learned also, an easy prey to seduction. A richer spouse also tempted them, for all the great preferments were in the apostate church. The hopes of Rome thus continued to be supported, and their secret practices in all nations attended with considerable success. Where they could influence the ruling powers, the subjects found no agreements or treaties binding. Hence in Poland, the Protestants, under a variety of pretexts, were robbed and plun-

dered, ejected from their churches, deprived of their schools, and cruelly punished, in order to engage them to renounce their faith and profession, in contradiction to all justice, and without hope of redress. The same scene was acted in Hungary, under the hereditary bigotry of the House of Austria, AN. 1671. The dukes of Savoy and Piedmont were instigated to hunt out the poor remains of the Waldenses from the fastnesses of the mountains, where they had sought a hiding place, and with all the animosity of inquisitorial cruelty, to waste by fire and sword the feeble, but patient and unresisting remains of this faithful people. AN. 1632—1685.

In Spain, as the number of Moriscoes was so great, and their attachment to Mahomed inveterate, the enmity of the clergy, and the intolerance of bigotry compelled them to quit their country, or their religion. Millions of the Moors, faithful to their prophet, sacrificed all their substance, relatives, and native land, and were transported into Africa ; carrying their diligence and arts to enrich the soil of Fez and Morocco ; and leaving a desert behind them yet unpeopled. But the *Church* gained, whatever might be the losses of the *State* ; and procured acquisitions in the evacuated kingdoms, which well repaid the zeal of the inquisitors.

In France a constant infringement of the Protestant liberties reduced the numbers, and awakened the complainings of the oppressed. Every art was used to stimulate the ruling powers to persecution ;

and every wile of cunning to surprise the consciences of the monarchs, surrounded by jesuits, confessors, priests and bishops, all in a league to bring back the Huguenots to the house of their prison. After being long harrassed by persecution, the revocation of the edict of Nantz, compelled many hundreds of thousands of French Protestants to seek refuge in foreign lands. AN. 1684. Ah! the day of recompence is come. God is visiting upon the children the iniquity of their fathers, and giving them blood to drink, for the innocent Protestant blood poured out on every side.

Nor were the artifices of popery confined to the nations under her own obedience. England was always an enviable object; so long a fief of Rome, and patiently plundered, now cut off root and branch from all connection or communication with the holy see. No faith was to be kept with such heretics; and killing them esteemed no murder, but meritorious. Such were the maxims of popery; such Garnet, the Jesuit superior in England, taught; and surprised the conscientious papist, Sir Everard Digby, and others, into a plot, the most horrible in its nature, and which threatened to be the most dreadful in its effects, AN. 1605; no less than to blow up the king and both houses of parliament with gunpowder; and in the confusion of the nation, which must ensue, to set up the Roman Catholic religion. The blood runs cold when we review this scene of deliberate and atrocious wickedness, sanctioned by Rome, and sure to merit the highest degree of glory in that anti-

christian church. Just at the moment of its execution, a gracious Providence discovered the infernal design, and exposed the diabolical conspirators to the righteous laws of their country.

Disappointed, but not discouraged, the pontiffs and Jesuits pursued their object with more caution, and deeper laid schemes ; and sometimes with a prospect of success, that filled the ambitious prelate with premature exultation ; though mercifully ending in disappointment. What could not be effected under JAMES I. was attempted under his successor CHARLES I. AN 1625. He had taken a bigoted papist for his Queen ; and with her a legion of Jesuits followed. He had promoted the violent Laud, half a papist, to the see of Canterbury, who seconded all his tyrannical designs. Mosheim, indeed, is utterly mistaken in asserting, that they caused " the Church of England to be new modelled, and publicly renounced the Calvinistic opinions ;" for the articles, liturgy and homilies continued in full force as ever ; yet that they wished and attempted it, is too true. Laud was a bitter Arminian, strongly suspected of leaning to popery, and constantly endeavouring to enlarge the ritual, and bring it to a greater conformity with Rome ; whilst his encouragement, seconded by the royal patronage, of all who opposed the established doctrines ; and his cruelty and oppression of those who held them, whom he charged with Puritanism, because they zealously counteracted his designs, kept the best men out of the Church ; or silenced those who were in it ; and encouraged

the apostates to greater diligence by the assured prospect of preferment. Forbes, one of them, who well knew the objects then pursued, has given every reason to conclude, that both Charles I. and his archbishop, would have been well content to come to terms, and be reconciled with Rome. This fatal event was prevented, by one little less to be deplored, the civil wars which broke out, and brought these unhappy innovators to that fearful end, which many who most abhorred their popish and tyrannical designs most deeply condemned. When once the torch of discord had lighted up the flames of war, the politic CROMWELL and his associates, led on the conflagration; and the head, which wore the crown, fell the victim to his own bigotry and duplicity, and the ill-directed councils of Laud and his popish advisers.

Thus for a while the wicked, but exalted Protector, waved the bloody sword, not only over his own land, but made the monarchs of Christendom tremble, court his friendship, and suspend their persecutions against the Protestants. Even the tiara itself was obliged to bow down; which he sometimes threatened to pluck from the head of the unworthy wearer; and his menaces were known to be no *bruta fulmina*; but terribly realized against his enemies. Whatever judgment may be formed of his character by others, the reflecting Christian will probably think as I do, that tyrannical as Cromwell was, we are as much indebted, under a gracious over-ruling Providence, to this man for the preservation, as to the bloody Henry VIII. for the introduction of the Protestant relig-



ion amongst us. The good hand of our God for good, is not the less to be acknowledged, because the instruments employed meant not so, but acted under the impulse of their own pride, ambition and selfishness.

AN. 1660. The restoration of CHARLES II. once more revived the most sanguine hopes of Rome. He was a man of the most profligate character and corrupted principles; and as popery to such a one, was the most convenient religion, he had during his exile, embraced it, and become the pupil of the Jesuits. But as the utmost secrecy was needful, in order to procure his return, he made the most specious and solemn professions of zeal for the Protestant faith and the Church of England; and was obliged to veil his designs at first, under the cloak of the profoundest hypocrisy. When he had by this means recovered the throne of his ancestors, the love of ease, and the love of pleasure, palsied his secret desires for the restoration of the religion he had embraced; and which only could be established in a nation who abhorred it, by a contention that might have again sent him into the banishment from which their voice had recalled him. Not that his purpose was altered or his plans laid aside. His treaty with the king of France, through the secret negociation of the Lord Arundel of Wardour, a zealous papist, had the restoration of popery for its grand object.

AN. 1670. And though he was withheld by political circumstances, from introducing the promised supplies of men, he received the unkingly subsidy

of two hundred thousand pounds yearly, to betray his country to its enemies ; and *wept*, says Mr. Hume, *for joy* during an interview with his sister, the Duchess of Orleans, at the hope of quickly realizing the project of bringing back his kingdom within the Romish pale of obedience. But his indolence, his cowardice, and the pursuit of his scandalous amours, occupied his time and thoughts, and diverted him from venturing upon any steps of danger and difficulty. Death surprised him in the midst of his pleasures, and the profession of Protestantism, with his bishops around him. A popish priest was hastily sent for, up the back stairs ; and the rest all excluded whilst he made his last peace with Rome, and received the delusive viaticum. Thus died as he lived, that wicked, gentlemanlike, lewd, deceitful, popish hypocrite, Charles II.

AN. 1685. The Church of Rome had a more faithful and zealous son in his successor JAMES II. Open in his profession, and more violent even than his Jesuit confessors themselves, he no sooner succeeded to the throne, than he unveiled, with unjesuitical imprudence, his intentions ; and thus defeated his own designs. Too sincere to dare be a hypocrite, and too confident of his own power to carry his purposes into execution, he wantonly trampled on the laws of the land ; affronted the Church by all the trumpery of the mass restored in his chapel ; and the nation by acts of despotism it was little disposed to endure. His craftier associates would have checked the rapidity of his movements,

and the pontiff himself wished to rein in the impetuous monarch ; but the merit and the glory, after which he aspired, of saving the nation over which he presided, from hell and heresy, drove him furiously on to his own destruction. The generous WILLIAM of Holland, who had married his daughter, the next Protestant heiress to the throne, obeyed the call of the people, and hastened to their deliverance. James, deceived by courtier bows and professions, flattered himself with the fidelity of his army and navy ; but, no sooner was the Protestant deliverer landed, than every man, even his dearest friends and his own daughter, deserted the bigot king, and left him as destitute of all help, as before he had appeared despotic and servilely obeyed. Thus once more the prey was taken from the mighty, and in the critical moment, when the waster was ready to destroy, a gracious interposition of Providence preserved the purity of religion, and the liberties of the land. Rome gnashed with disappointed rage and malice, sought to arm her avengers to restore the abdicated monarch ; and allured with the hope of ambitious conquests, the rival governments of France and Spain, to second her own deep laid schemes of subjection, but in vain. William, firm in the affections of his people, lifted up the banner of victory ; and in Ireland and England, humbled all his enemies, and laid the foundations of a constitution, which, with Father Paul, every good Englishman prays, *æsto perpetua.*

The arms of Rome were now again reduced to subterfuge, wile, and cunning. The Jesuits unabashed, and rising, Antæus like, from their defeats, marshalled anew their forces. In France there arose a host of Polemics, who were called *Methodists*, from the artful methods which they took to confound, seduce, and pervert the Protestants from their religious principles. Veron, the Jesuit, and others, with the eminent Cardinal Richelieu at their head, endeavoured to establish the authority and unity of the Church, as a divine constitution, where the danger of schism, and the prescription of antiquity formed the plausible arguments of sophistry. The contempt into which Popery is now sunk, and the extinction of its most crafty supporters, makes it superfluous to reply to arguments long since confuted, and follies now become obsolete ; and of which the remaining satellites of Rome are themselves ashamed. But in that day, much mischief arose from them ; and between the seductions produced by interest, fear, ignorance, or surprise, many departed from the profession of faith, and reconciled themselves to the false Church. Yet, on the whole, the progress of knowledge weakened the pillars of superstition, and in every state the increase of infidelity was still more evident than of popery ; and the mines were prepared of that philosophical impiety, which our days have seen bursting into explosion, and overturning all the strong holds of Catholicism.

The promising appearances also of the spread of Romanism in many foreign lands, at the beginning

of the century, declined towards the end of it, and all their laurels of conversion were blasted in Asia, and Africa. Partly by the intrigues discovered in Japan, which awakened that ferocious government against the Jesuits ; partly by the insolence with which they carried on their pretensions, as in Abyssinia, and which ended in their expulsion, AN. 1634 : By these calamities, whether true Christianity gained or lost, is a very disputable matter.

A quarrel with the Venetians had nearly separated that country from the Romish jurisdiction. The mediation of Henry IV. King of France, prevented a fatal rupture ; but the bands of allegiance were so loosened, and the peace restored on such terms, as securing the pontiff's honour, left him only nominal power in religious matters ; whilst the state maintained her national authority and independence. The famous Father Paul, the candid author of the council of Trent, gained himself, in this controversy, immortal honour, by defending the liberties of his country against the usurpations of Rome : and, as Cardinal Norris owns, ever since the papal bulls pass with difficulty the Po into the Venetian territories. AN. 1607.

AN. 1641. Portugal threatened a still greater defection, but restrained by the chains of prejudice, they dared not as hardily reject the servitude of Rome, as they had boldly recovered their country from the usurpation of Spain, AN. 1640. During all the long years which this conflict contin-

ued between the rival nations, the see of Rome, overawed by the Spanish terrors, refused to grant any bull for the consecration of Portuguese bishops, and left that kingdom deprived of such spiritual succours as her pontiffs could afford. Yet, the hero who defended his independence with success against the Spanish monarch, dared not break with the Roman prelate. Inquisitorial power, and national prejudices, compelled him to temporize, till the peace with Spain permitted the Pope to issue the necessary dispensations: and thus has Portugal continued the most abject vassal of the Romish see to this day. AN. 1656.

The sturdy opposition of the French bishops to the papal encroachments on their privileges and immunities, fortified by the jealous pride of her mighty monarch against all foreign claims, had, from the beginning, preserved the Gallican church from the servile subjection to which the other Catholic kingdoms had been reduced. This was a perpetual subject of contention. The faithful legions of Jesuits maintained the legitimacy of every papal claim. The parliament of Paris, and the native ecclesiastics, defended their liberties, and excited often the papal indignation; but the popes with-held wisely their anathemas, which had lost so much of their terrors, and confined themselves to remonstrances. Indeed, humiliating instances appear of pontifical imbecility, and Gallic monarchical power. The punishment for an insult committed on a French ambassador, AN. 1664, was rigorous and truly mortifying to papal

pride, AN. 1678 : but the dispute about the rights of presenting to benefices, during the vacancy of the Gallican bishoprics, shewed that the *spiritual* claims of the Pope would be as little respected as his *temporal* dignity. Bulls upon bulls on one side, and severe edicts on the other, against those who dared to pay them the least respect or obedience, threatened a breach not easily repaired. The Gallican bishops supported their monarch, and in a solemn assembly decreed, that all the churches of France were subject to the King's *regale*, or right of nomination, during the vacancy of every see : but they added decisions still more mortifying, and derogatory to papal authority. AN. 1682.

1st. Excluding Rome from all interference in the temporal concerns of sovereigns, and restraining her authority to spirituals only.

2d. Confirming the decrees of the council of Constance, subjecting the Pope, as well as all others, to a general council.

3d. Maintaining all ancient usages and immunities of the Gallican church inviolable.

4th. Denying the infallibility of the papal decisions, unless sanctioned by a general council ; these, the clergy and universities throughout the kingdom, adopted. Nor could the terrors of excommunication, or the inflexibility of the Pontiff, alter their determinations ; and though some soothing letters were written to appease his wrath,

these decisions continued the rule of the Gallican Church.

AN. 1687. A claim, much more unreasonable, of a *right of asylum for criminals*, to a great extent at Rome, under the French ambassador's protection, spoke the proud haughtiness of the prince, and the degraded dominion of the prelate, even in his own capital. For nothing could be more unjust, or tend more grievously to the interruption of the peace and good government of the city, than such impunity. The king of France would be obeyed ; and he only yielded as a favour, what he claimed as a right. But in the matter of the *regale*, the King carried his point, saving the honor of the holy see by some slight modifications. The struggle, however, between the rivals for power, ceased not ; each, though more covertly, carried on their schemes of offence and defence. Sometimes jesuitical influence won the monarchs to side with the holy see ; but they jealously watched against every thing which might diminish their own authority, though they now and then sacrificed their ecclesiastics, and their immunities. Indeed, the boasted liberties of the Gallican Church were confined to these. Pope, king, bishops, parliaments, and universities, equally set themselves against every thing that deserves the name of liberty in the Church, and always beat down every effort of this sort, with a rod of iron. At last the triumphs of liberty are heard, and that sacred name abused, to cover every act of cruelty and licentiousness. Church and State have sunk



in the promiscuous ruin. That *neither*, such as they were before, may ever spring from the ashes of the conflagration, is the devout wish of every true friend to religion and freedom.

Attempts were made, and with some success, to reform the monastic orders, become woefully corrupt. But it is now hardly a subject worth consideration, however important at that day. The Benedictines bore the palm ; and the separation of monks into orders, reformed and unreformed, speaks pretty strongly the state of these societies. The time is past—they will probably soon be consigned to oblivion, and their names only preserved to demonstrate more strikingly the folly of mankind. The most rigid of *La Trappe* are said to have owed their establishment to a singular incident. Their founder, De Rancé, was enamoured of a lady, with whom he had lived in a state very unclerical, AN. 1664. After a short absence, returning, he passed to her chamber by a back door which he had commonly used. There a dreadful scene presented itself ; the dear object of his affections had fallen the victim of the small-pox ; and, in all the disfigurement of that horrible disease, was laid out a corpse ; the room illuminated, and hung with black. He stood motionless, gazing in stupid horror on the face he had adored ; and hasting to the most gloomy and desolate region of France, buried himself in the monastery, which long attracted so much attention and respect for

its austerities : but now happily evacuated, can hardly be employed to a worse purpose than it was before.

Towering super-eminent above the rest, the Jesuits rose to the summit of power and influence ; envied, feared, and hated by all their monkish brethren ; and in a system of consummate policy and perseverance, defeating all the attacks made on them ; and looking down upon their impotent, though envenomed assailants. Among these, the Jansenists were the foremost, and most formidable, and brought upon themselves in consequence, the wrath of the partial pontiffs, whose tiara itself was compelled to bend to the majesty of jesuitical influence. Had any man dared suggest their fall and extinction at that day, with what contempt would his predictions have been treated ?

The state of learning in popish countries was certainly highly improved ; and though the famous Galileo was cast into prison by the inquisition, for adopting the system of Copernicus ; this did not prevent the other literati from investigating the discoveries he had made ; and the court of Rome itself, however terrified with the introduction of novelties in philosophy, as in religion, was compelled at last to admit the possibility, *that it might be true*, which demonstration had proved ~~could~~ not be false. So the earth was quietly permitted to revolve round the sun, as the centre of our planetary system, without any farther anathema.

But, high as the attainments of the learned rose, the state of morals sunk very low. The dignitaries of the Church were the creatures of courts; and as they gained their preferments by the servile arts of flattery, and interest in great men's favour, so they used their emoluments accordingly, in a life of indolence, pleasure, and magnificence. The care of souls was a consideration which entered not into their views. The inferior clergy, in their gradations, followed the same steps, and procured patrons by the same means. It must not be denied, that some happy exceptions were found to the general depravity, but they were treated with contempt and enmity, and sure to bring down upon themselves the envy and resentment of their brethren, for pretending to be righteous over much, and carrying things too far; not without insinuations of their hypocrisy and spiritual pride, which the others, as more honest, disdained.

Among those pre-eminent as authors and theologians, who wished to improve the heart by their writings, and the world by their example, we may justly reckon the seminary of *Port Royal*: from which issued the works of Pascal, Arnaud, Nicole, the fathers of the Jansenists, and by whom, chiefly, all that can be called spiritual religion in France, was preserved, unless we except the mystics, with the excellent Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, and others, who displayed in their conversation and conduct, the amiable spirit of divine charity; and like Enoch, walked with God, amidst all the errors of the false religion which was professed around

them. God had, no doubt, still within the Romish pale, a people to the eternal praise of the glory of his grace : but they were few, and in general of no reputation ; and sure to be the objects of reproach, in proportion to the purity of their lives, and the spirituality of their tempers. Wherever, instead of form and ceremonies, men sought communion with God, and made his word the rule of their conversation, they brought upon themselves animadversion, according to the different dispositions of the governments under which they lived.

I may not stay to expose the corruption of doctrine and morals, in which the Jesuits bore the palm, sure to be defended, or skreened by the holy see, because the whole purport of their perversions led to the exaltation of the Pontiff, and the establishment of the pillars of his throne. Hence all the complaints, remonstrances, and detections, made by their adversaries, produced no effect at Rome. They had usually sufficient credit to procure their own vindication, and the condemnation of their opposers ; and, even in the great contest with the Dominicans, though so many of the fathers, with Augustin, were against them, on the subject of predestination and grace, after a dispute carried on for years, under successive Popes, they contrived to ward off the decision against their mighty Molinos ; and the Pontiff compelled the combatants to make a drawn battle, (AN. 1605) least, deciding for the Dominicans against the Jesuits, he should give the Protestants occasion of triumph, and

strengthen their cause. Policy, not truth, dictated every measure of the Roman see.

AN. 1640. But the Pontiffs testified greater partiality to their jesuitical friends, in the cause of the Jansenists, on the very same subject, which Jansenius, the learned bishop of Ypres, supported ably, in a book entitled *Augustinus* ; being an exact and faithful epitome of the doctrine which St. Augustin taught, and the Church had so often sanctioned. This book made a very great noise within the Roman pale ; and being the very opposite to the doctrine which the Jesuits taught, they bent their whole force to procure its condemnation, and succeeded. AN. 1653.

The papal bulls, which issued on this occasion, produced in France the most violent controversies on the subject : but the conflicts, then of importance, between Jesuits and Jansenists, have long since ceased to be such. Suffice it to observe, that the worst side carried their point, and armed the magistracy to suppress those whom the Pope condemned. The persecuting church always bears the brand of Antichrist ; the persecuted have presumptive evidence in their favour, that they follow at least the dictates of conscience.

In search of the true Church, therefore, and of those who have any pretensions to be ranked among the living members of the body mystical, I am compelled to prefer such as the papal bulls condemned. Instead of the long ridiculous list of the canonized saints, added by the pontiffs, this

century, to the Roman calendar, which I must leave to oblivion,—saints unknown in earth and heaven ; I turn to seek those within the Roman pale, who appear to have escaped the corruptions of the world, and not to have known the depths of Satan ; however tintured by superstition, or enslaved by Church prejudices. Among the millions of clergy and laity in this idolatrous Church, debased by superstition, sunk in ignorance, or tied and bound with the chains of their sins, some probably were found, who, seduced by the dread of schism, and the fear of papal excommunication, continued in the observance of the outward forms, without placing religion in these things ; and believing to the saving of their souls, truly feared God, and wrought righteousness.

Among the *Jansenists* a considerable band appears of faithful confessors, whose works are still read with admiration, and whose real piety deserves to be imitated. I do not readily receive the accusations, that Papists or Protestants have objected to them, as over rigorous and fanatic in their devotion ; but I will admit many things might be blameable ; a tincture of popery might drive them to push monkish austerities too far ; and secretly to place some merit in mortification, which, they in general disclaimed ; yet, with all that can be said, surely the root of the matter was in them. When I read Jansenius, or his disciples, Pascal or Quesnel, I bow before such distinguished excellence, and confess them my brethren, shall I say, or my fathers. Their principles are pure and

evangelical ; their morals formed upon the apostles and prophets ; and their zeal to amend and convert, blessed with eminent success. I will pity the wanderings of a St. Cyran, and allow for the prejudices of education ; but I will ever love and honor those who appear to have loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and dared to suffer for his sake : I believe the Lord of life will honor them at the day of his appearing and glory.

Among those called *Mystics*, also, I am persuaded some were found, who loved God out of a pure heart fervently ; and though they were ridiculed, and reviled, for proposing a *disinterestedness of love* without other motives, and as professing to feel in the enjoyment of the temper itself, an abundant reward, their holy and heavenly conversation will carry a stamp of real religion upon it, when all their jesuitical opponents, with the time-serving Bossuet at their head, will be weighed and found wanting. If I pity any thing in Fenelon, it is his submissive publication of the papal bull, which condemned him, conscious to his dying day, that no one of his sentiments were altered. Some will call this weakness, some hypocrisy ; but I can suppose a purer reason, his desire of peace, and his dread, lest opposition should occasion divisions, which ultimately might produce more evil than good. I will not vindicate the motive or the reasoning ; but to such a man as Fenelon, though I blame his conduct, I shall give full credit, that he acted as he thought right in the sight of God. It is pleasant to behold, amidst the darkness of po-

pery such luminaries ; and no doubt to this their disputes with the Protestants had greatly contributed. Even those who pertinaciously still adhered to the Church of Rome, were indebted to their adversaries for a portion of the truth and godliness, which they were led to embrace and follow.



## CHAPTER III.

## OF THE GREEK CHURCH.

**S**UNK to the lowest state of debasement under the Turks, degraded in character, disfigured by superstition, grovelling in ignorance, and pining in poverty, little can be hoped from such a communion. Yet, were efforts made repeatedly to win them over to the subjection of Rome in vain. The appearances of success always vanished, the prejudices of education prevailed, and attachment to their own forms and ceremonies kept them separate. Even were their submission obtained, it seems but a miserable acquisition. Rome however continually maintained a host of her missionaries in the East, endeavouring among all the Oriental Christians to gain proselytes; and now and then new bishops were dispatched with a pompous name, to preside over congregations whose numbers were so few, and poverty so great, that they seemed scarce worth the expence necessary to keep up the appearance. The alms they distributed were the most instrumental means of the conversions, which seldom endured longer than the continuance of them; and it is singular enough, that the Greek students, who had been brought to Rome for education, and initiated in all the mysteries of popery, are said, on their return to their

native country, generally to have adopted their former profession, and to be the bitterest opposers of the popish pretensions of dominion over the Eastern churches.

Among those who have most firmly rejected the attempts of the Roman pontiffs, Cyrillus Lucar may be reckoned—a man of real piety and extensive learning, beyond what usually has filled the chair of Constantinople. After diligently examining the Romish and Protestant opinions, he seemed much more disposed to form a union with the latter than the former ; and in consequence corresponded with the Protestants of eminence. This bitterly provoked the Catholics. The Jesuits, through the French Ambassador at the Porte, exerted all their intrigues to render Cyril odious and suspected by the Turks. Having gained some envious Greeks to their party, they formed an accusation against the good patriarch, of pretended treason, and procured his death by the Ottoman Emperor's orders. His crime was his piety, and disposition to unite the Greek and reformed churches—an offence inexpiable in the sight of Rome and her satellites. AN. 1638.

Every artifice continued to be employed by the Jesuits to soften down the differences between the churches ; and to make it appear that they were of a trifling and indifferent nature ; and therefore that the Greeks might be indulged in all their peculiarities, and yet return to the unity of the Church. But all the art employed has never been able to

effect the reconciliation ; and they appear as distant from each other as ever. The same attempts have as little succeeded with the other Oriental churches. They still maintain their independence both of Rome and of Constantinople. The Nestorians, the Monophysites, have their separate patriarchs ; and their different branches, Copts and Armenians subsist, though reduced almost to a state of inanity. The church of Russia, a chief member of the Greek communion, holds little connection or none with the patriarchs of Constantinople. It may now be reckoned indeed among the first in extent of empire, yet respecting the life and power of Christianity, very, very little will be found among them : profound ignorance, multiplied superstitions, and most debasing intemperance, mark the clergy and people. It is to be hoped there are exceptions. Our acquaintance with their language is small. I am not informed of any Russian theological work that claims attention, for depth of biblical criticism, or faith unfeigned. A sect, though not of modern date, is said to have occasioned some disturbances in the empire. A.D. 1666. They called themselves the multitude of *the elect*, or *Isbraniki* ; their adversaries branded them with the title of *Roskolniki*, or the multitude of the *factionous*. As we have no explicit account of their tenets, we must be content with the general grounds of their separation from the church of Russia, which they alledged, was on account of the corruptions introduced by the negligence and ambition of their prelates. They affected, themselves, extraordinary piety and mortification ; and a veneration for the letter of

the holy Scriptures, which was carried to an excess of superstition. They would not allow a priest to minister baptism, who had that day tasted brandy. This seemed indeed a prudent precaution ; because a Russian cannot be trusted with the bottle to his lips, without emptying the last drop of its contents : but they appeared to harbour an abundance of follies and superstitions ; such as esteeming it to be of the last importance, that their priests should give the benediction with three fingers ; as with two only, it would be the depth of heresy. However, we must know more of them before we can form a true judgment. It hardly seems probable, that they were a very enlightened sect ; but rather a scion from some of the scattered Paulicians or Bogomilians, of former days, sprouting afresh, and as they multiplied, awakening fresh attention. They have been excommunicated, dragooned, and exercised with all the *gentle* corrections of fire, sword, gibbets, imprisonment and exile, but have maintained their profession, by retiring to the woods and deserts of that forlorn country, where they still subsist, especially among the Calmucks. Since the accession of Peter the Great, they have been treated with mildness, and indulged with toleration. Perhaps there will be found among them a people that shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. I see not through the vast Russian empire, where the truth of godliness is more probably to be sought.

I wish to look round, and discover the living features of animated Christianity in the East ; but,

alas ! all is darkness that may be felt, and death-like profession only, within the Christian pale. Yet, when I see such a man as Cyrillus raised up, and know, that the blessed word of life is in their hands, I cannot but hope there were some happy exceptions to the general ignorance and superstition, and that God had not left himself without witnesses. May their numbers be multiplied more abundantly !

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

CHRIST is not divided ; unhappily his people are. But if they cultivated the spirit of love and meekness, bearing and forbearing with one another, the little differences of opinion would never be permitted to disturb the unity of spirit, or to break the bond of peace. There is scarce a man who deserves the name of a real Protestant, so prejudiced as not to acknowledge, that we are all one in Christ Jesus ; why not then love one another out of a pure heart fervently ? The time, I hope, will come—"Blessed are the peace-makers, "for they shall be called the children of God." It will be happy for the Church of Christ, when divine charity shall enlarge her borders, and bigotry be driven to her gloomy cell.

The Protestant Church comprehends *Lutherans*, the *reformed*, or Calvinists, and a variety of *other denominations*, that cannot immediately be classed under the two great general divisions.

## 1st. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

WE have seen the desolations produced by the ambition and bigotry of the house of Austria, instigated by Rome and her Jesuitical crew, hoping

that they could down with it, down even to the ground. The great Head of the Church was otherwise minded. The bush burned and was not consumed. But the Lutheran cause suffered also by the defection of some of its most strenuous supporters. In the beginning of this century, AN. 1604, MAURICE, Landgrave of Hesse, a man of very eminent attainments, embraced, after deep investigation, the Calvinistic system of doctrine : and new modelled the university of Marburg, and the ecclesiastical establishment of Hesse, after the reformed plan : though not without great opposition from the Lutheran divines. AN. 1619. Yet though he thought himself bound to promote the truths which he had himself embraced and to exercise the authority with which he was invested in his own dominions, it is to be observed to his honor, that he shewed Christian moderation and temper in the disputes which could not but be the consequence ; and he is said not to have been chargeable with any acts of oppression or violence, leaving a generous liberty of conscience to all his subjects. The ELECTOR OF BRANDENBURG followed his example, AN. 1614, and declared for the reformed religion, without enforcing the doctrine of the decrees, or the decisions of Dort, but left every man free liberty to abide Lutheran or Calvinist, according to his conscience ; dispensing his favours to both without partiality, and recommending a spirit of conciliation ; to abstain from offensive terms, or injurious aspersions ; consenting that the rites which were objected to might be abolished ; and entreating, that wherein they still

differed, they would bear with each other, and cultivate a spirit of peace and patience. But to this the Lutheran clergy refused to consent, and not only excited fierce debates, but stirred up the people to a spirit of discontent, and alienation from their sovereign, and tumults which only force could suppress. The Saxon divines took part with their brethren, and unhappily blew up the flames of discord, to the great injury of their cause, and the hurt of their university of Wirtemberg, which the elector was compelled, by the treatment he had received, to forbid his subjects any more to visit.

Good men on both sides lamented, that when the Philistines were upon them, the sons of Israel were setting their swords every man against his fellow ; and earnestly wished to reconcile the two great bodies of Protestants together, that they might be more united, and form a firmer phalanx against their popish invaders. To hope for uniformity in opinion, was a blessing, in the present state of human infirmity, and under the prejudices of education, not to be expected : but to soften down the angles of asperity—never to dispute passionately—to seek not for victory, but truth—to give the most favourable explications to the terms used on both sides—to bring forth the great fundamental principles, in which Calvinists and Lutherans are agreed—and in the deeper and abstruser points of difference, to approach as near as possible—and where they could not unite, to agree to bear with each other in the disputed articles, and to



keep them as much as possible from producing vain contention, which only begat ill-blood, and not conviction—these were the objects of the conciliators. Herein the reformed, it is allowed, were the first to concede and make approaches; allowing their Lutheran brethren not to have erred in any fundamental doctrine. But the Lutheran divines were more tenacious and less yielding, and refused to acknowledge as much of the Calvinistic tenets; and rejected with too much disdain the conciliatory offers of their brethren. Mutual reproaches and recriminations tended not to heal but to widen the breach.

AN. 1615. The peace-loving JAMES I. endeavoured to interpose the weight of his influence, and to solicit this desirable union among the Protestant churches. He employed for this end, the famous Du MOULIN, to sound the different parties: but he soon grew discouraged, when he found that the Lutherans testified an utter aversion to accede to the proposal.

AN. 1631. However, the French Protestants, in a synod held at Charenton, determined to give their Lutheran brethren a testimony of their cordial regard, and to open a door for any return which they might judge fit, by declaring, “that the Lutheran profession was truly conformable to the gospel, and free from fundamental errors.” But no overtures were the consequence.

AN. 1631. One conference more, indeed, was held at Leipsic, between the divines of the two communions ; and the spirit, temper and moderation with which it was managed, gave hope it would re-unite them. The jealousy of the Lutherans, that some artifice was concealed under the apparent candor and concessions of their brethren, disappointed the happy issue which was expected. After all, the same unchristian distance remained.

AN. 1645. A more comprehensive scheme, which should comprise Catholics, could hardly succeed in Poland.

AN. 1661. Earnest to succeed, the Landgrave of Hesse renewed the attempt to bring the Protestants nearer to each other ; and now the fraternal embrace, which closed the conference, promised greater future union ; at least mutual forbearance and love. But the moderate men who retired from this pleasing scene, were unable to inspire their Lutheran brethren with their own candor and charity ; and only drew upon themselves the invectives of the bigots, as betraying by their indulgence the cause they were deputed to defend. Thus has it often been the lot of the noblest spirits to desire to do good to the ungrateful and the prejudiced, and to be abused for their labours of love.

What the authority of princes, and the weight of synods could not accomplish, individuals might well despair of effecting. Yet one kind and resolute spirit, undismayed by the difficulties, resolved to devote himself to the work ; which during forty

years, he unweariedly pursued. Wherever he went and made his object known, he was generally received with kindness, and heard with attention; but after all his toils and travels through the Protestant regions of Europe, he found obstructions insurmountable, and bigotry and prejudice that refused to bend. But he shall not lose his reward: The Prince of Peace will remember JOHN DURY.  
AN. 1631—1674.

The good Bishop of Stregnez in Sweden, deserves a memorial for his zealous concurrence with the travelling Scottish pacificator: and CALIXTUS, the divinity professor of Helmstadt, seconded warmly the same noble design; but they brought a nest of Lutheran hornets about their ears. The cry of the Church being in danger, drove the peace-making bishop from his see, to a retirement from the clamors of party: and Calixtus was glad to be hid in the grave from the torrent of abuse and misrepresentation; as sacrificing truth to conciliation. Thus obstinately did the Lutheran divines reject all approaches to communion with their reformed brethren. Unhappily they were not less divided among themselves. Incensed at those who wished to heal the breaches, and to engage men's hearts in a spirit of union and piety, the larger body of the Lutheran Church, especially the Saxon divines, treated them as innovators in religion, and branded them with the names of *Syncretists* or *Pietists*. An account of these will include the most important concerns of the Lutheran Church; especially in the point which is the great

object which I am pursuing, under every denomination of Christians, to discover the true spiritual Church of Christ.

At the head of the *Syncretists* was CALIXTUS, of whom mention has been made before. The charge laid against him, was his attempt to unite all bodies of professing Christians in mutual forbearance and charity with each other, notwithstanding the points of opinion in which they might differ ; and, if possible, to enable them, without bitterness and mutual anathemas, to meet in some general principles wherein they all agreed ; and to leave all other matters of dispute aside. At least, if any differences were discussed, that it should be done in love, and in the spirit of meekness, without breach of communion. He was of opinion, with his friend John Dury, that *the Apostles' creed* contained every article necessary to be believed for salvation ; that *the ten commandments* were a sufficient rule of life ; and *the Lord's prayer* included every essential petition which a christian needed to ask of God. All, therefore, who held these general principles, might, he trusted, give each other the right hand of fellowship, and hope to meet together in the world of the blessed ; whether Papists, Reformed, or Lutherans ; as each professed to hold these in the same veneration, and to admit their indisputable truth. No man appears a more determined Protestant than Calixtus, or has written with greater force against the errors of the Romish Church ; though he was abused as half a Catholic, because he maintained, that in the

Church of Rome *the fundamental articles* were still held ; and that salvation might there be obtained, even though men were under many mistakes and prejudices of education. He admitted the union of churches was impracticable, under the decisions of the council of Trent ; but, that the union of charity might be cultivated between the members of the different churches, holding the first common principles of Christianity. The divines of Helmstadt united with their colleague in this endeavour : many of their brethren, at Rintelen, Koningsberg, and Jena, approved the general lines of conciliation proposed by them ; but they met with the fiercest opposition, were esteemed as traitors to the Lutheran cause, and apostates from the Lutheran faith : and charged with both inclining to the reformed, and the popish religion. Contradictions so glaring, as only the exasperation of prejudice and party could suppose possible or true. The particulars of all the bitter contests and invectives which this controversy occasioned, with the interposition of the civil magistrate, I shall pass over. It affords but a mortifying lesson of human infirmity, that whoever, or whatever is right, or wrong ; wise men, learned men, religious men, should so far deviate from the spirit of truth and meekness. Nor does it give a high opinion of the Saxon divines in particular, who wanted to introduce a new creed of their own sentiments, which could not but have made a division in the Lutheran Church. The amiable design of Calixtus, should it be mistaken charity, pleaded for lenity at least, instead of such bitterness and malignity, as *Calovius*, at

the head of the Saxon Lutheran doctors expressed : but bigots to churches, and advocates for truth, are very different persons. Did religion, indeed, stand merely in *opinion*, and one line of aberration must not be admitted from what is established in each church, who then can be saved ? The consequences are obvious to every enlarged mind, who is at all conversant with the spirit of true Christianity.

But the divisions which arose on the account of *Pietism*, were still more to be lamented, as they served but too awfully to demonstrate, that deep piety, in the Lutheran Church, was an offensive object, and the pretensions to it judged deserving of the highest censures.

The origin of *Pietism* was certainly the apprehension and conviction, that real religion had greatly declined in the Lutheran Church—that the clergy were become too inattentive to the care of men's souls, and too attached to this world and its emoluments ; or too much engrossed with scientific pursuits, foreign to their immediate designation. That there is always too much reason to fear the decline of true godliness, the experience of all ages testifies.

AN. 1670 The excellent SPENER, a man eminent for real truth and godliness, lamented the declensions which he supposed, at least, he beheld around him. He set himself, therefore, to re-animate the languid zeal, and to quicken the diligence of his brethren, by establishing at Frankfort,

*societies for religious exercises*, for prayer, praise, and mutual communications; in order to bind each other in a firmer bond, to resist the overflowings of ungodliness, and to bear a living testimony by their conduct, to the purity of the truths which they professed to believe. A treatise on the disorders of the Church; and the prevailing corruption of manners, with the means best suited to remove them, was circulated by this good man; and awakened very general attention. A variety of persons, in different places, accordingly associated on the plan which Spener had recommended; and, as could not but be the case, awakened the jealousy, and provoked the enmity of the clergy and others, whose conversation they reproved, not merely by the exhibition of a different conduct, but sometimes by rebukes and charges, not always perhaps, dictated by prudence, or the meekness of charity. These associations, therefore, met with much opposition: and as popular odium, or the licentiousness of the baser sort, instigated by their enemies, often interrupted their assemblies, the charge of disturbing the peace of the public was laid at their door: and, as usually, some wild-fire is ready to mingle itself with the sacred flame on the altar of truth, persons of an enthusiastic or turbulent disposition, sometimes united with the Pietists and gave their adversaries occasion to blaspheme.

The alarm which had gone out against this rising sect, collected greater force, and was viewed as a matter of more serious import, when the

learned professors, FRANCKIUS, SCHADIUS and ANTONIUS, with others; uniting cordially with Spener in his pious designs, began to consider the causes of the decline, which was too evident; and supposed they could trace them principally to the improper manner in which young men at the universities had been trained up for the ministry. Discarding, therefore, the metaphysical mode of tuition, and the jargon of the schools, where Aristotle's subtleties had been often more studied than the Bible; and a rage for controversies of no real import to improve the understanding, or to affect the heart, occupied the time, and exalted the conceit of the captious disputants; they resolved to alter their mode of lecturing. Taking the oracles of God for their thesis, they endeavoured to make these pure fountains of wisdom and knowledge better understood, both respecting the *doctrines* therein contained, and the *application* of them to the consciences of their pupils, in order to the production of the genuine fruits of righteousness and true holiness. These *scriptural exercises* excited vast attention; (AN. 1689.) Multitudes pressed to hear them; and, that many were affected by them, and brought to a happy change in their religious conduct, even prejudice could not deny. Malignity, indeed, wished to misrepresent; what had not only its novelty to offend, but the real reproof contained in such conduct to irritate. The other professors charged them with exciting tumults and promoting animosities in the university; and, being abundantly the majority, these good men were called to a public trial, for the in-



novations which they had attempted ; and though declared free from heresy or immorality, were forbidden to proceed any farther with the plans of religious instruction which they had commenced.

AN. 1692. Suspended thus from their attempts to edify the students at Leipsic in sacred literature, and driven from their professorships for the *Pietism* imputed to them, the university of Halle invited Franck and Antonius thither ; and Spener had a similar offer, which he accepted from the Elector of Brandenburg, at Berlin. They pursued there the same line of conduct, and were attended by the same numerous audience and pupils.

The professors and pastors of the Lutheran university of Wirtemberg, were highly incensed at, and condemned these novel practices as detrimental to the interests of the Lutheran Church, over which they watched with jealous care: probably they felt it as a reflection upon themselves, that these biblical professors should attract such attention ; and their societies formed for prayer and religious exercises, raised an imputation of negligence on the established pastors. For the flame of Pietism had spread through all the Lutheran churches ; and, in every city, town and village, persons arose, professing to be stirred up by a divine impression on their minds, to revive the cause of religion, and to rouse the attention of their neighbours to greater seriousness in the concerns of an eternal world. As persons of all conditions and sexes were affected with Pietism, artisans, me-

chanics, and labourers, met together for religious exercises. The illiterate as well as the more instructed, prayed and exhorted in these societies : and, as could not but be the case, when the numbers were considerable, and some among them more forward, zealous, and imprudent, than well informed, occasions of reproach were taken against them ; and some, perhaps, justly : and, as is always the case, the irregularities or improper conduct of mistaken individuals, were laid to the charge of the whole body. The clergy especially took a part against these Pietists ; and the magistrates being instigated by their fears or jealousies, severe laws were enacted to suppress these societies, and prevent the spreading of these innovations in the Lutheran Church.

AN. 1689. The term *Pietist*, which was given in derision by the scoffers, to those who attended Franckius and his associates, and lived in a course of strict piety, “ was afterwards,” says Mosheim, “ applied to all, who, distinguished by excessive “ austerity of manners, regardless of *truth* or *opin-* “ *ion*, were only intent upon *practice*, and turn- “ ed the whole vigour of their efforts towards the “ attainments of *religious feelings* and *habits*.” Mosheim was a Lutheran divine, philosophic, and no Pietist. Yet his partial representation speaks nothing unfavourable, when he is compelled to add, as a faithful historian, “ *that persons of emi-* “ *nent wisdom and sanctity, remarkable for their ad-* “ *herence to truth and love of piety, bore commonly* “ *the same opprobrious name.*” And, in another

place, “*that none could despise their intentions, without appearing the enemy of practical religion.*” The truth of the matter is, that zealous godliness, as is usual, provoked the reproach of the cross. But the learned ecclesiastic mistakes, or misrepresents the real character of Franck and his colleagues. So far were they from being regardless of *truth* and *opinion*, that no men more rigidly contended for, or taught more explicitly, the *fundamental doctrines* of Christianity. They, indeed, were no bigots to the Lutheran profession, though they preferred it; but they supposed many of their reformed brethren, equally sound in the fundamental articles of faith with themselves: and therefore they would not refuse their friendship and society, because of the *opinions* in which they differed. So far, indeed, the charge may be admitted in the fullest latitude, that these good men looked upon the tenets of *barren orthodoxy*, when not attended with divine power in the conscience, and purity in the conduct, as nothing worth; and were more earnest to inculcate the necessity of faith, with its effects, than to establish a rigid conformity with the Lutheran definitions. Why it should be supposed that their manners were *austere to excess*, I see no one proof produced; and am disposed to believe from all I have read or known, that they were as remarkably amiable in their behaviour, as kind in their spirit, and compassionate towards the feeble-minded. Nor in a day of great dissipation and corruption of manners, which Mosheim every where confesses and laments, ought a peculiar carefulness to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, to

be branded with so harsh an insinuation. As to their efforts to attain *religious feelings* and *habits*, the author has not perfectly understood the subject, if he supposes they meant to *substitute religious feelings*, in the place of *practical godliness*, which he allows them to have pursued ; and, if he means to put a contempt on *religious feelings, or habits*, I own, I wonder how any man can be supposed to exercise divine love to God or man, to live in real habits of devotion, or to read and believe the great and precious promises of God's word, and not *feel* the out-flowings of desire, and the sensations of delight. A religion *without feeling* is certainly not the religion of the Psalmist, nor compatible with the graces of the spirit, described by St. Paul. But *the private meetings*, in which their devotional exercises were held, and the feelings of their hearts poured out in prayer and praise, were regarded as very enthusiastic, and reprobated by those, who not being at all inclined to join with them, were ready to justify their own superior excellence, by degrading their brethren with imputations of fanatic devotion, and unnecessary austerity.

Nothing can better express wherein this austerity consisted, than the very account Mosheim himself gives of the motives which influenced these good men, and the steps they took to revive the decaying interest of the true Lutheran religion. They imputed to the clergy the great cause of the declension evident. They supposed their manner of preaching unedifying ; their conduct not purely exemplary ; and their negligence of their holy

function, as highly blameable. To this they attributed chiefly the over-flowings of ungodliness, the progress of vice, and the general carelessness about religious worship in the Church, in private families, and secret devotion. As they esteemed this the source of all the evils which they saw and lamented, it was natural for them to begin at the fountain-head : and as this necessarily implied reflection on the pastors themselves, and on the universities which had sent them forth so ill qualified for their charge, both were highly exasperated against these reformers, and set their faces against their schemes for amelioration. It is pleasing to trace the steps which they took, and the amendments they proposed, in their preparation of young men for the ministry, their enemies themselves being the reporters.

They laid it down as a sacred axiom, that no man could have a *divine call* into the Church as a minister, unless his heart was filled with the love of Christ, and of the souls redeemed by his blood—he must be unexceptionable in holy conversation—and endued with a competent measure of literature, especially well versed in the holy Scriptures. They therefore banished the scholastic theology, which ministered only questions instead of godly edifying—they avoided dwelling strongly on the points in dispute between Christians ; and discouraged all bitterness of controversy, though they neglected not to arm their pupils with divine truth. The Scriptures were the first object which they commended to their study and attention, making

all philosophic pursuits, and ornamental literature a subordinate part of education. This was interpreted by their adversaries into a contempt for human learning, though confessedly none had a larger share of it than these worthy professors ; and their pupils were no dishonour to them in this behalf ; but because they treated as of less importance the defence of the outworks of Christianity, such as merely arguing on its evidence and reasonableness ; and rather preferred an immediate attack on the conscience by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; the wise apologists and disputers of this world charged them with degrading the dignity of polemic theology, and giving the enemies of Christianity advantage.

In consequence of these views of the internal spirit of a minister of Christ, they insisted upon the necessity of a *solemn dedication* of himself to God ; and that every clergyman ought to be an example and model of the doctrines which he taught, and the practices he recommended : affirming, to the great indignation of their brethren, that no man could be truly called to the ministry of the gospel, who was not in his own soul a sharer of the blessings of divine grace, and a pattern of his own precepts : a strictness this, in the eyes of the laxer professors, which exposed the Pictists to much censure, and involved them in many disputes, “ whether a bad ecclesiastic could be a *true* “minister of the sanctuary,” and such like unprofitable questions. They recommended to their pupils to preach the simplicity which is in Christ, and

not to be tied down to any phraseology that scholastic theology had sanctioned : but the most offensive part of their instructions to the young students for orders, was an abstinence from a variety of things, in which the professors of religion generally indulged themselves. Some of these, though in their nature not absolutely sinful, they supposed to have a strong tendency to divert the mind from serious objects, and to corrupt the heart with inordinate love of pleasure. Others they reckoned in themselves *immoral*, as the stage, and such like entertainments ; gaming of all kinds ; books of a corrupting tendency, however humorous or, well written ; and sitting long at feasts, or wine, where, though not intemperate themselves, their presence might embolden others : nor did they reckon as *innocent*, but rather dangerous, and to be avoided, all promiscuous meetings of the sexes, for *dancing* and *jollity of every kind* ; and even the *sports of the field* were prohibited to their pupils, as not seemly and of good report for ministers of the sanctuary. Many thought these instructions unreasonable and severe, and that the clergy might well indulge themselves and countenance their people in what they were pleased to term, *a little innocent pleasure*. Disputes on these subjects arose ; and, as is the case with disputes in general, they were carried on sometimes with too much asperity.

But nothing excited in the clergy and others, as has been hinted before, more general opposition than *the societies*, which the Pietists every where instituted for religious exercises ; and into which

they desired to admit none, whose exemplary conduct did not adorn their profession. This kind of separation from the world, and pious singularity, was peculiarly offensive.

That among the multitudes who were united with the PIETISTS in these societies, some betrayed intemperate zeal, and occasionally broached erroneous opinions, was to be expected and lamented. None, however, more sharply condemned all such things than the body of the Pietists themselves.

Whether Arnold is to be reckoned in the number of those censurable in this respect, I know not. His ecclesiastical history is charged by Mosheim as too partial to heretics. The bitter and sarcastic writings of Dippelius certainly deserves censure. I wave the mention of the visionaries, such as Peterson, or the Theosophists, revived by Jacob Boehmen and others, who, though for a time they glared as the meteor in the sky, and attracted the eyes of gazing curiosity, suggested nothing tending to the revival of general religion and piety; any more than the tribe of prophets and prophetesses, who alarmed the fears of the credulous, had their day, and were forgotten.

Two things, however, deserve to be particularly observed. First, that among the Lutherans an evident great departure had begun from the life of godliness which animated the first reformers. Scientific pursuits were more in request than gospel purity; and, as is too observable, the decline of



piety, and the progress of philosophy, are always accompanied with an equal proportion of infidelity, and cavilling at the doctrines of revelation—a charge not peculiar to the Lutheran Church, but awfully applicable alike to the reformed, as we shall see, and, as has been noted, to the Romish communion. But infidel writings had not yet prevailed with the same open contempt, as at present, of the religion of their country; though, the philosophic tribe, with Leibnitz at their head, was paving the way: and Martin Seidel published his impious opinion of the person and office of Jesus Christ, which in the main, hath found since more strenuous defenders than he could muster in his own day.

But, Secondly, A more pleasing feature of the Lutheran Church, appeared in the evident and wide-spread revival of godliness, which, however opposed by philosophers, disliked by the clergy, or ridiculed by the multitude, produced a host of confessors. That some really good men, might have been prejudiced against the Pietists, may be admitted. They too hastily entertained the unfavourable reports of their maligners, and were led away by their misrepresentations; but among those who bore the name of Pietists, or were at least supposed to be *pietistically inclined*, the vitality of the spiritual Church of Christ was chiefly to be found. The lives and labours of these men would have been an ornament to whatever church they had belonged. I dwell with greater pleasure on these than on all the votaries of Aristotle, or

the reformers of the philosophic school, the learned, and in their day, men of renown. I am neither in pursuit of the Stagyrte, nor his correctors, of the new philosophy nor of the old, of Theosophists, or metaphysicians, but of the true and faithful followers of the Son of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity.

Before I close the account of the Lutheran Church, their attempts to send the light of divine truth into heathen lands, deserve an honourable memorial. The Danes have been particularly mindful to communicate to their colonies and settlements in Asia, Africa, and America, as well as Greenland, a knowledge of the salvation which is by Jesus Christ.

AN. 1634. A zealous individual, the learned Heyling of Lubec, penetrated into Abyssinia with this intention ; and recommending himself to the Emperor's favour, rose to the highest office in the state. In returning to Europe for missionary assistance, he perished by the way : nor has it since appeared, that he left any abiding trace of successful labours behind him. The pious Duke of Saxe Gotha wished to renew the experiment, in the person of the Abbot Gregory, an Abyssinian, who had resided for a while in Europe. He was unfortunately shipwrecked on his voyage, and that good design failed. AN. 1657, Wansleb, who offered to supply his place, grievously disappointed the expectations of his noble patron, and proved himself unworthy of the office which he had undertaken :

since that time nothing I believe hath been attempted in Abyssinia of a missionary nature. But in such a case surely we should never be weary in well-doing, or faint at our disappointments. The time shall come, when Ethiopia and Saba shall stretch out their hands unto God. In this noble contention of zeal, the Lutheran and Reformed Church may strive without the breach of charity ; and blessed are they who shall arise to devote themselves to this self-denying service, and become the honoured instruments in this glorious cause.

## 2nd. OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES.

THE Reformed Churches continued rather on the increase, except in France. The loss of the Lutherans in Germany, by the defection of the Prince of Hesse and Elector of Brandenburg, was followed by the Duke of Holstein, and the Saxon Duke of Dessau ; AN. 1688. And in Denmark, multitudes departed from the Lutheran tenets respecting the Eucharist, to the more rational and scriptural ones held by the reformed. But the great accession to the Reformed Churches, was principally owing to the wide extended settlements of the English in North America, and their possessions in Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands ; whither they carried their own profession of faith, and extended it among the Indian tribes, and the unhappy negroes, who, though too much neglected, were sometimes the objects of instruction in religious knowledge. I hardly mention the establishments in India and the East,

which as yet formed inconsiderable factories ; and where the attention to commerce left too little care about religion.

England itself, a chief member of the Reformed Churches, happily, as has been mentioned, escaped the snares which popery had laid for her ; and though with many blemishes, continued a glorious Church. Yet, though enabled to struggle against her foreign adversaries, convulsions within, and that between brethren of the same faith, shook the foundations of Church and State to the centre.

AN. 1603. JAMES I. who ascended the throne after Elizabeth, with the cordial approbation of all parties, was unhappily a wavering, unsettled character. With the pride of a pedant, and the dupe of flattery, he entertained a high opinion of his own king-craft. Educated in the Kirk, he had professed the most unshaken attachment to the Scottish Church, and her presbytery, "*as the purest Kirk under the sun :*" but he had no sooner crossed the Tweed, and met the bowing bishops, and the magnificence of the English court, than he relished them far beyond the land of his nativity, and thought them more congenial to the high monarchical principles which he was disposed to entertain. The Puritans were sanguine in their expectation of favour and indulgence under a Scottish king, brought up among their brethren ; but they soon found themselves woefully mistaken ; as James far preferred the pomp of cathedral worship to the simplicity of the Genevan ceremonial. Yet as he

loved to display his own theological knowledge, and gloried in his pacific principles, he held a grand conference at Hampton Court, with the professed intention of reconciling the differences between the Church and the Puritans ; in which he affected to act the impartial umpire. But the impious flattery of Whitgift gained him wholly. Won by the high flown compliments paid to his wisdom, his self-conceit greedily swallowed what the courtly prelate exclaimed with rapture, "that the King spake by the special assistance of God's spirit." Whilst the hypocritical Bancroft, in the same strain of adulation, falling upon his knees before him, "protested his heart melted with joy, "that Almighty God had given them such a King, "as since Christ's time had not been."\* These incense bearing bishops beat the stiff Puritans hollow ; who could offer no such adulation. Besides their proposals for church government, accorded not with his high prerogative principles, to which a hierarchy and lord bishops, his supporters, were much more agreeable. A few trifling alterations in the liturgy, left the Puritan party as discontented as ever. Respecting doctrine, no alteration had yet been whispered. The Bishops held the Calvinistic system, and abhorred popery. The excellent Abbot who filled the see of Canterbury, and was firm in attachment to the ecclesiastical establishment, had been strongly fixed in Calvinistic principles. He was a man of uncommon piety

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\* Though I hope Whitgift and Bancroft were good men and good bishops, yet historic impartiality compels me to condemn a conduct so destitute of the simplicity which is in Christ.

and gentleness of spirit, an utter enemy to all constraint in matters of conscience ; and willing to indulge his dissenting brethren, as many of the other bishops thought, to a fault. It was during his government of the church, that the famous synod of Dort was held, AN. 1618, of which I shall speak hereafter, and King James, always great in religious disputes, dispatched three divines of eminence to attend, as from the reformed Church of England, with their other brethren, to decide on the important controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. The excellent and amiable Hall, afterwards bishop of Norwich, was one of them.

Though James acceded to the condemnation of the Arminians, the articles of the Church of England being till then at least, held indisputably Calvinistic, yet his dislike to the Puritans, whom he permitted his bishops to persecute, led him to a more ceremonious worship, and a fickleness in leaning to the doctrine which he had condemned : and records remain, which lead to just suspicion of his strong inclination to popery, as more conformable to the despotism he always affected and desired ; and his rage to match Charles, the heir-apparent, with a popish princess, justly alarmed the jealousy of every true Protestant.

In his hatred of the Puritans ; his thirst for despotic power, unfettered by parliaments ; his partiality to Rome ; and favour towards those who espoused the Arminian principles, and the pageantry of ceremonial worship, Charles I. exceeded his

father ; instigated and influenced by Laud, whom he had raised to the archbishopric of Canterbury : a prelate of the most insolent temper, and the most superstitious. Neither justice nor compassion stood in his way, when the Puritans were to be oppressed, insulted and ruined.\* Many of them were driven from their native land, and fled to other countries of Europe and America, and more it is said were with Cromwell actually embarked, when an order compelled their stay, to submit to the severities that should be exercised upon them. **AN. 1637.**

Driven by these ill-advisers on his ruin, Charles armed those with despair, who felt that resolute resistance only could break the yoke of bondage, ecclesiastical and civil, from their necks. I pretend not to vindicate or palliate the violences and crimes that followed, when the Puritans of differ-

\* **AN 1630.** A single trait of Laud's character, drawn from his own diary, will delineate the man better than any painter. Dr. Leighton, one of the Puritans, was, by the archbishop's instigation, condemned in the Star Chamber to the most atrocious and ignominious punishment. When sentence was pronounced in court, Laud, pulling off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, gave thanks to God who had enabled him to behold this vengeance on his enemies ; and he thus records the execution of the sentence :

“ Nov 6.—1st. He was severely whipt before he was set in the pillory—  
 “ 2nd. Being set in the pillory he had one of his ears cut off—3d One side  
 “ of his nose was slit up—4th. He was branded on the cheek with a red-hot  
 “ iron, with the letters S.S On that day se'nnight, his sores upon his  
 “ back, ear, nose and face, being not yet cured, he was whipped again at the  
 “ pillory in Cheapside, cutting off the other ear, slitting the other side of his  
 “ nose, and branding the other cheek.”

Of what a spirit must that man have been, that could with apparent satisfaction, record in a private diary, such an act of cruelty, injustice and malignity, perpetrated under the cloak of law and religion !

ent sects uniting under their leaders, first overturned the government, and then fell under the servitude of a Protector and a military rule, which they had unintentionally contributed to erect. *Really good* men are always the few in every denomination. And as their principles forbid them to seek this world as their kingdom, or to obtain power and influence by undue means, they are scarcely ever the persons who lead their party, but are compelled to swim with the stream, and of two evils to choose the least. Hence, in all revolutions, the power lodges in the hands of the ambitious, the violent, the crafty, and the men of least conscience, whatever piety may be pretended, when it can be made subservient to their purpose. And thus all parties in power have equally abused it; and the Puritans meanly as unchristianly retaliated upon the bishops and clergy, all the ill-usage and intolerance of which they had themselves so heavily complained. Indeed respecting real religion, Charles's character and conduct was little less equivocal than Cromwell's. And though in moral excellence the one will be allowed the better man, the other, whether fanatic or hypocrite, was certainly the abler politician, a firmer antagonist to the papacy, and a more strenuous supporter of the Protestant cause.

It was in the midst of these convulsions, that *the Independents* arose from very lowly beginnings, to the summit of influence: preferred by Cromwell to Presbyterians and Episcopalians; both of whom he more dreaded, as ready to erect a power-



ful government in the Church, inimical, to that which he wished to establish.

The *Brownists* were the original stock. From Leyden, Robinson, their teacher, re-imported the tenets of that sectary, with considerable improvements, and they spread with the greatest rapidity. In doctrine they were perfectly of accord with the reformed, and with the articles of the Church. In discipline, they maintained the independence of each congregation, as a complete Church in itself. They allowed not every man to minister on his own motion, but only such as were *called by the Church*, and who *ought to be endued with competent learning*. They avowed submission to the civil powers, and *that a kingly government, bounded by just and wholesome laws, is both allowed by God, and also a good accomodation unto men*. But the truth seems to be, that though they could submit to this government, they preferred, and wished with the Anabaptists, and other sectaries, a republic, in preference to a monarchy; and, whilst it lasted, were its steadiest supporters. Many excellent men were of this denomination, eminent for knowledge as piety, among whom Dr. Owen holds a distinguished place. After the restoration they sunk very low. At the revolution they formed a union with the Presbyterians, but continued few comparatively, till of later years their congregations have greatly increased, from causes I shall detail hereafter.

AN. 1647. During the scenes of contention and turbulence, in which church government bore so

great a part, various sects sprung up, many of whose names are only preserved as monuments of human folly. One only continuing to our days, deserves a more particular attention, the sect of the *Quakers*. Their apostle, George Fox, a shoemaker, supposing himself divinely inspired, rushed forth to proclaim war against all past and present modes of church government, as babylonish inventions. The clergy, and all forms of religious worship, were particularly objects of his abhorrence. He and his followers often entered the churches, expressly to interrupt the public service, and revile the ministers. Women, as well as men, joined in these disorderly proceedings ; and were often committed to prison by the magistrate, as disturbers of the peace ; in which sufferings they gloried. Gentle and mild as the present race appears, the first founders of quakerism were violent, unruly, and headstrong ; and exclusive of the matter which they pretended to teach, their manners were as highly exceptionable for their turbulence, as for the singularities they affected. When the first ebullition had exhibited the most blameable instances of fury, immodesty, and folly approaching to madness, the next generation softened down into simple manners, and a more rational procedure. During the protectorate they were the violent and avowed enemies of Cromwell, whose dread of them for a while, induced him by the rigorous arm of punishment, to endeavour to suppress their fanatic rage ; but finding it in vain, he confined himself to diligence in watching their motions, and counteracting the mischief which he apprehended from them.

Under Charles II. the famous Robert Barclay drew up his apology, and endeavoured to render their theological system more plausible, and divested of all that the first more fanatical preachers had broached of error and absurdity. Still two things remained, which exposed them to the greatest trouble and vexations. Holding the *unlawfulness of oaths*, they refused to swear allegiance to the government, and alike holding the *unlawfulness of tithes*, the law alone enforced the payment ; a method, when constantly to be recurred to, as troublesome to the plaintiff, as it was vexatious and finally injurious to the defendant ; who was compelled at last to pay, with costs of suit, often far exceeding the original demand.

James II. favoured them with all sectaries, insidiously hoping by this means to gain an easier toleration for his Catholic brethren. And he had an especial regard for their chief man, William Penn, the well known founder of the present flourishing State of Pennsylvania ; whither he led a large body of his brethren to escape the vexations to which they were continually subjected at home.

William III. the great recoverer of our national liberties, embraced them in his generous toleration, and indulged them in their peculiarities. Since that time they have in general proved dutiful subjects, and contributed greatly to the prosperity of the commonwealth by their industry and frugality.

Their fundamental doctrine is derived from the ancient mystic school, " That in every human be-

“ing there is an internal light, or Christ within, “a portion of the same eternal reason that exists “in God.” On this leading principle all their system depends ; which necessarily excluding the idea of the vicarious substitution of Christ, terminates ultimately and really in *refined deism*. This *reason* is the same in every man, Jews, Turks, and heathen ; and requires only to be brought into exercise, in silence, meditation, and the removal of the envelopements of carnal appetites, which obstruct its sublimation, in order to rise into perfection.

All being alike endued with this *inward light*, all have an equal right, whether men or women, to edify their brethren by its emanations, as they feel the motions of the internal word. Forms of devotion, hymns or sacraments, are therefore superfluous : even the holy Scriptures themselves have no more authority than the discourses of those who have the same inspirer.

To procure the subdual of the animal man, that would bury the divine seed in darkness, the greatest abstemiousness of living is to be observed, and every indulgence avoided : not only all amusements are to be renounced as criminal, but all shew of politeness, or respect of persons, is absolutely to be abstained from. These form the most distinguishing peculiarity in Quaker manners.

But to return to the thread of the English Church History. When after the turbulence of the

civil war, on the death of Cromwell, Charles II was restored, AN. 1660, the former persecutions of the Puritans and Dissenters were renewed, as soon as Charles was well settled on the throne; and episcopal government set up in Scotland, as well as England; and by the act of uniformity, AN. 1662, all ministers were ejected from their cures, and prohibited from teaching, who objected to prelatical government, and to be re-ordained by bishops. After scenes of violence and oppression on the one hand, and opposition, loud murmurs, and invectives on the other, some men of gentler tempers wished to soften down all the asperities of Christian brethren, and to induce them to a greater union, or tolerance, both in doctrine and discipline; that Episcopalians, with Presbyterians and Independents, the two great sects, might coalesce, and then the rest would be more easily brought in. The pacificators, though attached to episcopacy, and the established worship, wished to concede its necessity as *a divine institution*, and essential to the being of the Church, though contending for its antiquity; and as contributive to the *well-being* of the Church. They would not therefore exclude from communion those who preferred other forms of government or worship, whether abroad or at home. And as to *doctrines*, they desired to reduce them to fewer heads, in which Calvinists and Arminians might meet, leaving the abstruser points of difference, as not essential to salvation, to be held by each without provoking contention, or exciting bitterness of spirit. These conciliatory divines were termed

*Latitudinarians*, and though confessedly eminent for learning, and of blameless manners, drew upon themselves the bitter reproaches of the rigid on both sides, as men destitute of real principles of religion, and fit for any change.

But these attempts proved abortive, and it was only on another revolution of government, that toleration delivered those from many penal laws, who objected to subscribe the act of uniformity.

That a great decline in the life of true Christianity towards the end of this century was observable, is generally agreed. It had made rapid strides in the reign of Charles the Second, at whose accession the profligate manners of the court encouraged every abomination. The rigid maxims of the Puritans, with their starched persons, were held in aversion and turned into ridicule. Men easily and rapidly passed to the extremes of vice, to avoid the suspicion of the semblances of piety. And as a life of dissipation was in fashion, religion began to be a contemptible thing. Hence, since peculiar seriousness branded a man as puritanical, and effectually prevented all church advancement, the clergy took peculiar care to escape, as far as possible, from what must destroy their hopes of preferment, and not to be righteous over much, or sharp rebukers of courtly immoralities.

Theological subjects, also, began exceedingly to give place to literature more polite, and knowledge more scientific. The candidates for the ministry, at the universities, were diverted by the classics,

buried in mathematics, or bewildered in metaphysics ; and the Bible, if not among the proscribed books, was neglected grievously ; and it would hardly have been a matter of good report in college, to have it said that a man read and studied the Scriptures diligently, except as a matter of science. Thus men made vast progress in all branches of human learning, whilst biblical studies, especially in any devotional way, were little attended to.

From the dregs of former sects, one is said to have left pernicious effects, and is branded with the name of *Antinomian*, carrying the reformed doctrines respecting the decrees, to an abuse before unknown ; these pleaded, “ because the elect must be saved, “ that all calls, admonitions, and exhortations, were “ vain. That nothing was to be preached but the “ promises in Christ. And, as it was admitted, “ that the elect never fall finally from grace, they “ suggested, that a man might live in the grossest “ crimes, and continue a believer ; and, not being “ under the law, would not have sin imputed to “ him, being complete in Christ.” The numbers, indeed, of those who *professed* these tenets, were very few, whilst too many, who still held the Calvinistic system, lived as if they *believed* them to be true.

But a far more pregnant cause of this declension than any other, arose from the new method of preaching, adopted by the latitudinarian divines above mentioned, who being chiefly Arminians in opinion, wished to avoid the peculiar and charac-

teristic doctrines of Christianity, which had been so much dwelt upon formerly, and to confine their instructions to the beauty of virtue, and the force of moral obligation. Thus, without the great mainspring of Christianity, they laboured, in most admired compositions, to teach men to be virtuous till all power of godliness was lost; and an awful demonstration was given, that when the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, is not taught and felt, all other endeavours to correct the morals of mankind will be impotent and vain.

By these men also, a singular schism was introduced into the Church, towards the end of the century, when, on the abdication of James II. and the accession of William III. a number of the episcopal bench, who were high in their notions of royal prerogative, as well as in the divine right of episcopacy, and bound to the hereditary line of Stuart by principles of passive obedience and non-resistance, refused to acknowledge WILLIAM III. as a lawful King. They were consequently deposed, and their sees filled by the most eminent of the latitudinarian doctors, Tillotson, Moore, Patrick, Kidder, Fowler, and Cumberland; who made no scruple of occupying the vacant bishoprics; and were esteemed by the high Church party, who espoused the ejected bishops' cause, as robbers and intruders; and charged with the deadly crimes of rebellion against God and the King, and with schism of the Church. Thus two parties arose, more peculiarly distinguished than before, of *high-churchmen*, the excluded non-jurors,



and all those who approved their conduct, and held the same opinions of monarchy and episcopacy: though to keep their preferments, they took the oaths, and submitted to King William. The other party, more moderate, or *low-churchmen*, entertained more liberal opinions respecting the people's right, in certain cases, to choose their own governors, and of the mitigated ecclesiastical authority, which claimed no dominion over the consciences of men, or privileges, but under acts of parliament.

To this day the same parties subsist; though the high-churchmen are reduced very low: and, indeed, if these new bishops, according to the high-church principles, were intruders, rebellious and schismatical, and all their ordinations invalid, there is hardly an ecclesiastic in the land who does not derive his sacred character through them and their successors: and, therefore, according to high-church principles, their ministrations are null and void; but though the pride and intolerance of some who occupy these high places, are much the same as in their predecessors, and have procured them the character of high-churchmen; they choose not to admit the invalidity of the powers, which have advanced and consecrated them to their present eminence; content with the honour and emoluments, and not disposed to quit their stations, through any scruple about the legality of their appointment.

It must be remarked, that however declining the state of religion at the end of the century appear-

ed, never had England produced so many, or so able writers on sacred subjects of every kind, as in the former part of it. Of these the works of many will live to edify the latest posterity : among them some of the English bishops maintain a high rank. The Puritan divines were remarkably laborious, and deep in biblical literature. But latterly a great change was perceivable. The men of the first and best generation were gathered to their fathers—another race of finer polish arose, less attached to the characteristic doctrines of Christianity. Arminianism in principle generally prevailed ; and ingenious defences of Christianity against the infidels, and compositions of an admired purity of the moral kind, were in the highest estimation. The great doctrines of the fall, and its consequences—the corruption of human nature—the redemption by atonement—the justification of a sinner by faith alone—and the necessity of the influences of the Holy Ghost to produce all purity of heart and life—these, and the like topics, grew out of vogue, and gave place to the more philosophic system of moral suasion, metaphysical reasoning, and ethical essays on virtue, its beauty and obligations. Yet there remained some, many, faithful adherents to the Calvinistic doctrines of the articles ; and even Bishop Burnet, not too much attached to them, owns, that however generally subscribed by the Arminians for preferment, they were certainly inconsistent with their opinions ; and that this subscription was a great violation of ingenuousness. Not that all religion rested with the Calvinists alone : that it chiefly did, may be

concluded from the lives of the dissenters, who were certainly more strict in general, more pious and irreproachable, than their countrymen of the established Church; and such was the change now wrought in sentiment, that if there were any in the church who preached the Calvinistic doctrine, and maintained a peculiar separation of themselves from the world, they were often branded as Presbyterians. Yet among those who held the Arminian principles and high-church ideas, there were men of uncommon excellence and piety, such as Bishop Kenn, and others, whose primitive manners truly adorned their Christian profession. The regularity and decencies of worship were then also observed in many more families, and of the great and noble, than at present. These the laxity and growing dissipation of our day, have almost utterly discarded. I will not affirm, that there was in that age more true religion among the superior ranks of life, than in our day; though I believe there was: certainly, however, the forms and appearances of it were more respectably maintained.

But there is one that seeth and judgeth. The Lord knoweth those that are his. We must leave the final decision to himself; and whilst we speak the painful result of our own convictions, we may still comfortably hope, where the blessed book of God was so generally diffused, and works of such excellent instruction multiplied, that many, very many, amidst the great prevalence of evil, and the unchristian conversation around them, held fast

the faithful word, and lived in the practice, and died in the comfort of true Christianity.

## SCOTLAND.

**BEFORE** the close of the former century, the Reformation, after a sharp struggle, had been established in Scotland, and that kingdom had cast off the popish yoke. As is usually the case on such occasions, the very collision of the adverse parties had struck out sparks of burning zeal, on the one side to suppress, and on the other to spread, tenets rendered more dear and important by the very sufferings which they brought on the confessors. Thus, the sacred flame of truth had kindled in many a faithful bosom. Knox and his zealous associates had issued forth to preach the everlasting gospel, and rapidly spread the evangelical doctrines through the land. The Church government was as nearly as possible conformed to the Genevan model : and James I, who had been brought up in the Kirk, professed the most zealous attachment to it, as the purest church upon earth.

Many burning and shining lights, which the succinctness of this history will not allow me particularly to specify, illumined that northern region, in the long reign of this monarch. During his residence in Scotland, the bitter disputes about prelacy and presbyterianism, were rather compromised than conclusively settled. But, on the accession of the Scottish monarch to the English

crown, they revived with all unchristian temper. Gained to that hierarchy, James cast his weight into the scale, to the great disgust of the majority of his northern subjects, and compelled them reluctantly to submit to an episcopal regimen: but the discontented increasing, and more violent measures being pursued by his unhappy son and the bishops who presided in the Scottish Church, a convulsion followed, which terminated in the overthrow of monarchy and episcopacy. By dire experience, the unhappy Charles the First now found that he had no refuge among subjects, whose affections he had alienated by supporting an ecclesiastical regimen, which they abhorred. The very army to whom he fled for protection, basely sold and delivered him up into the hands of his enemies; and left one more record of experience to princes, how dangerous it is to irritate men's minds, by pains and penalties for religious opinions.

Cromwell's dominion was as ill brooked by the Scottish nation, as that of Charles the First; but their impotent attempt to restore Charles the Second failed, and they experienced the rigor of the Protector's arm. That popish proselyte, who had readily been prevailed upon to play the hypocrite among the rigid Scots covenanters, had however received so much disgust from them, that he resolved, after the battle of Worcester, to return no more to Scotland, but await his fate, and seek concealment in England.

During the protectorate, Scotland enjoyed many and great blessings—the gospel was diligently

preached, and the number of the faithful multiplied. The Restoration brought back episcopacy and disgust to all the Presbyterian party. During this reign and the succeeding, Scotland was a perpetual scene of struggles, discontent, and irritating, instead of conciliatory measures. Many of the best men and ministers in the nation, were persecuted and driven from their country, by the strong arm of ecclesiastical power, exerted rigorously to impose an establishment, to which the great body of the ministers and people were utterly averse. The Bishops sent into Scotland, with Archbishop SHARP at their head, served by their insolence and ill conduct to render the prejudices against episcopacy more inveterate. The peaceful and seraphic Leighton, after doing all the good, and preventing all the evil in his power, ashamed of his associates, and convinced of the improper steps taken to enforce an episcopal government, to which the body of the people was averse, resigned his archbishopric, and retired to a private station. His works will live a monument of evangelical piety ; in which the distinguished purity of the style can only be exceeded by the excellence and energy of the sentiment. The brutal Archbishop Sharp, who had rejected every mild and conciliating step suggested by his truly apostolical coadjutor, after having driven him by despair of serving the Church, from his see of Glasgow, fell the victim of his own violences, and died by the hands of assassins ; detested even by those who most condemned the bloody deed. The revolution under William the Third, brought back to the Scots their favourite

ecclesiastical government and discipline, which hath been continued to the present period.

During all this century the Scots may be considered as a remarkably religious people. And though the life of real godliness can never be supposed universal in any nation, yet the number of evangelical and zealous ministers in the Kirk was great, and their faithful followers numerous. Remarkable instances of great revivals of religion in various places are also on record. And though their solemn league and covenant, and too many instances of undue heat and intolerance, will never meet approbation from the historian of candor and liberality ; yet, with every thing which can be pointed out as censurable, no Protestant Church, in general, more eminently distinguished itself by purity of doctrine and holiness of conversation. My limits restrain me from entering into minuter details.

### IRELAND.

It may be a matter of some doubt, whether the kingdom of Ireland can be reckoned among the Protestants or Catholics ; for, though the government was in the hands of the former, the far greater part of the subjects continued in papal superstition and ignorance. Kept under by the strong arm of power, they waited the opportunity of emancipating themselves from this restraint, and restoring the dominancy of the popish religion. The rising discontents under Charles the First, afforded the moment of revolt, and the troops being

employed in the fatal contest between the king and the parliament, the Irish rose with savage fury, and massacred seventy thousand Protestants in cold blood. The irresistible arm of Cromwell reduced them to obedience, and punished them for their rebellion.

In the beginning of the century, some blessed labourers cultivated that vineyard. The names of Archbishop Usher, Bishop Babington, Downham and others, will ever be mentioned as the ornaments of that day, and of the Church which their labours edified. Nor, when the usurper seized the reins of government were the concerns of religion neglected, but a number of faithful and zealous ministers sought to extend the knowledge of the doctrines which are according to godliness among them. On the Restoration, the episcopal government was restored with the regal ; but the court of Charles II. produced few such prelates as had blessed the land in the commencement of the century. The same fearful decay among the churchmen was to be observed in Ireland as in England ; and the popish bigot, James II. wished to suspend all laws against those of his own faith, and to encourage the progress of his own religion. He found also among them his most strenuous supporters ; and when unable in England to raise the least body of partisans openly to resist the authority of William the Third, Ireland invited him to struggle for his abdicated throne ; and the English, under their glorious deliverer, were obliged to fight and conquer that rebellious country. But



the true religion continued in a state of great decay—little was done effectually to diffuse the principles of protestantism. The Papists, far the superior number; though under many disabilities, adhered to Rome and her superstitions. Satisfied with all the civil and ecclesiastical emoluments, the nominal Protestants expressed very little zeal for the real conversion of their popish neighbours. In all that is worthy the name of religion, Ireland sunk very low; nor were there scarcely any partial revivals. A death-like stupor seems to have prevailed universally. Between Protestants and Papists a strong line was drawn; but as to the life of godliness the difference was very little.

## HOLLAND

Stands next among the reformed governments in eminence. Though religious toleration was nowhere more nobly generous and extensive, the reformed religion was the only one established by the state, and that of far the greater body of the people. About the commencement of this century arose among them a sect, that hath received the name of *Arminians*, from its author, a divinity professor at Leyden; whose opinions produced the most unhappy dissensions, not only in the United Provinces, but throughout the Christian world. He had been educated at Geneva in the Calvinistic doctrines, but early in life began to be offended with the decrees as unconditional and absolute; and pleaded for what he judged the more rational system of *universal redemption*. What he

himself adopted, he publicly taught ; and as those tenets militated so strongly against the religion of his country, he was soon branded with heretical pravity, and the sound divines of that communion, with Gomarus, his colleague, at their head, expressed their high disapprobation and censure. The controversy was sharply maintained, and many ecclesiastics of the Dutch Church, and others, A.D. 1609, adopted the opinions of Arminius, who died in the midst of these contests : but he left able and resolute defenders, who carried on the war with redoubled vigour : among these were the famous Episcopius, Grotius, and Barneveldt. The Arminians claimed toleration ; and a compromise was offered, provided they would renounce the principles of Socinianism, of which they were suspected, and to which it was supposed their tenets led. Repeated conferences, however, were ineffectual to restore the broken bonds of charity. The Calvinistic divines, fully persuaded that the Arminian principles tended to sap the vitals of Christianity, and to destroy all the most important peculiarities of the religion of God incarnate, urged the magistrates to interpose their authority. Mosheim, though partial to the Arminians, admits that their latitudinarian principles led them to friendship with those, whose radical opposition to Christianity was suspected, and whose conduct was very unbecoming the gospel of Christ ; and that by this means they confirmed the bad opinion of their designs, which was suggested by their adversaries.

The peculiar sentiments of the Arminians, as contained in the writings of their leader and founder, turned on five points.

1st. That salvation was bestowed on the elect, on account of faith and perseverance *foreseen* : and damnation inflicted for unbelief and impenitence, *foreseen* also.

2nd. That every individual is *equally* redeemed by Christ ; though believers and good men only, finally receive the benefit.

3d. That *true faith* is only from the operation of the Holy Ghost, not from natural powers, or the self-wrought exertion of the human will ; but that a general sufficiency of divine grace is given to all.

4th. That the *divine grace*, or power of the Holy Ghost, begins, and carries to perfection, all that is good in the creature ; though the will of the impenitent does resist, and often renders the Spirit's operations ineffectual.

5th. That real saints may fall from a state of grace ; but this was at first rather expressed dubiously ; and, only afterwards asserted positively.

These are mentioned as the great points of difference from the Calvinistic divines : but it is said, that Episcopius, and the followers of Arminius, departed farther from them, into the Pelagian or Semi-pelagian system ; and many of them certainly inclined to Socinianism. The doctrines stated

above, were the avowed pillars of the Arminian creed : but their ideas respecting all *confessions of faith* were very lax ; and they maintained, that as Christians were only responsible to God for their religious opinions, no other confession of faith was necessary, than the admission of the Scriptures to be the word of God.

Political differences in Holland ranged the different parties under opposite leaders. Maurice, Prince of Orange, and those who supported him, were opposed by Barneveldt, Grotius, and Hoogerbeets, men in the highest places of the republic, and jealous of Maurice, as aspiring after undue power and influence. Gomarus and his friends attached themselves to Maurice—the Arminians to Barneveldt and his associates. The party of Maurice prevailing, Barneveldt lost his head, and Grotius and Hoogerbeets were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Arminians, though not exposed to suffer for their opinions as yet, were thus deprived of their former protectors and supporters, and were probably regarded with an evil eye by Maurice and the prevailing party of the republic, for the intrigues in which they were known to have engaged in support of their patrons.

AN. 1618. A national synod was demanded by the Calvinists, to judge the points in dispute. The States General issued their edicts for its assembling : and deputies from all the provinces of Holland were joined by their brethren, sent from the other eminent reformed churches of England, Switzerland, Hesse, Bremen, and the Palatinate,

to decide the matters in controversy. Episcopius, a man of high abilities and eloquence, was the head of the Arminian party, and appeared foremost to defend their opinions against the accusations of Gomarus and his associates: but the synod had hardly commenced its deliberations, before a dispute on the mode of proceeding, drove the Arminian party from the assembly. The Arminians insisted upon beginning with a refutation of the Calvinistic doctrines, especially that of reprobation; whilst the synod determined, that as the remonstrants were accused of departing from the reformed faith, they ought first to justify themselves by scriptural proof of their own opinions.

All means to persuade the Arminians to submit to this procedure having failed, they were banished the synod for their refusal; and retired with bitter abuse of the partiality with which, as they complained, they were treated. The synod, however, proceeded in their examination of the Arminian tenets; and as the Arminian doctors had left the assembly, their writings underwent a strict scrutiny in their absence: their opinions were condemned, and their persons excommunicated; whether justly or not, I shall not decide. — But nothing can vindicate the rigor and asperity with which they were treated, and the unchristian persecution which followed, and drove these men from their churches and their country, into exile and poverty. Surely such are not the weapons of a Christian's warfare. In the whole of this proceeding, ecclesiastical intolerance was made the

instrument of political artifice, to crush the party of their adversaries. Whatever sanctity the one side or the other affected, they both proved themselves to be but men : and if the weak and oppressed were to be pitied, their perverseness, and the provocations they had given, left them equally inexcuseable ; as will appear evident to those who weigh impartially all the circumstances on both sides.

The neighbouring countries received the exiles with hospitality ; but some of the most illustrious, as Vorstius, and others, gave too much cause to their adversaries to justify their suspicions, by verging to the Socinian doctrines : whilst the differences among themselves, were nearly as great as with those from whom they had divided. Hardly any two of the Arminian chiefs explained their sentiments alike ; some expressing in higher terms the doctrines of grace, and others sinking deep into the abyss of Pelagianism and Socinianism.

But the death of Maurice, their persecutor, opened a door for their return, under his less prejudiced successor ; and they were admitted to free toleration and peaceable enjoyment of their opinions. And it is singular enough, that ever since, though the Dutch Church has maintained the profession of the reformed faith, the ministers and people have generally been verging to the Arminian doctrines ; certainly the most congenial with human reasonings, and plausible in the misconceived ideas of charity and goodness. And though in

Holland, the professedly Arminian congregations are by no means numerous, the clergy of the establishment are said generally to rank on the latitudinarian side : whilst from thence the spread of the Arminian tenets, through all the neighbouring nations, has been prodigious : the generality in all Protestant countries embrace them, and the far greater number without knowing it.

In their wide extended colonies, however, the established religion was still maintained ; and Asia, Africa, and America, had received ministers of the reformed confession among them. But the state of spiritual matters was very low in all their settlements ; as at home they had abundantly partaken of the general declension, having a name to live, yet being dead : though many and excellent men were found among them in the Church, and with the sectaries from it of various kinds : of these I would just mention the Mennonites, who, after all their persecutions, found rest and quiet at last. Their former turbulence, and their refusing to swear allegiance to any government, rendered them every where suspected, and in many places cruelly treated. But time, and their own exemplary conduct, having opened the eyes of the nations, a greater spirit of candor and tolerance having grown up, and governments becoming sensible of the value of industrious subjects, whatever their faith might be, they were permitted to enjoy a common protection with the other sects, and sit under their vine and their fig-tree, and to be no more afraid. Their divisions among themselves, if not healed,

were mitigated. The very rigid followers of Menno were few, the rest, except in the point of baptism, coincided nearly with the reformed. They admitted three orders in their church, *bishops* or *presbyters*, who preside, and have the power of administering baptism and the communion. *Teachers* set apart for preaching and public worship, and *deacons* or *deaconesses*. All matters pass in a consistory, at which the *bishop* or *presbyter* presides. They and the *teachers* are chosen by suffrage, and set apart by imposition of hands. The English Anabaptists herein considerably differ, as they have only one rank of ministers.

## FRANCE.

THE Protestants in France from the time of Henry the Fourth's exaltation to the throne, formed a kind of republic within the monarchy, by the privileges they had obtained; and the fortified places, as Rochelle, Sedan, and others, which were given them as securities for the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religious liberties. But treaties are feeble cords to bind the strong arm of power: and the violation of faith with heretics is sanctioned by the Catholic's creed. The Protestant leaders were too often ambitious men, and the enemies of the Hugonots always watched for an occasion to deprive them of those privileges which necessity only had extorted; nor was that occasion long wanting. Cardinal Richelieu, who perceived that his master was but the lord of half his kingdom, whilst the Protestants held Rochelle, and could



always call their brethren to their assistance, after hard struggles to subdue their independent spirit, besieged and took their capital ; AN. 1628, which a variety of misfortunes prevented the succors promised by England, from relieving. Lying now wholly at the will of their enemies, whose tender mercies they had so often experienced to be cruel, the Protestants in France sunk very low under every oppression, and every violation of privileges, which they had no longer power to maintain. The insidious cardinal, and the imperious monarch, united with the Jesuits for their extirpation ; too intolerant to permit the Protestant profession under his dominion. Every artifice and promise, joined with threats, and sufferings of various kinds, were first used to engage them to apostatize from the faith of their forefathers, which indeed too many did. And on those who were obstinate in adhering to the Protestant religion, vengeance fell, and booted apostles dragooned them into compliance, or delivered them up to the bishops and clergy, who persecuted them with the most inveterate hatred and unrelenting cruelty. Multitudes fled their country, and sought an asylum in foreign lands ; and others unable or unwilling to fly, endured all that malice could devise, and abused power inflict, to subdue them to the yoke, to break their spirit, or consume them by suffering.

AN. 1685. The edict of Nantz was now revoked : and that wicked and bigotted Lewis the Fourteenth, instigated by his Jesuits and clergy, merited virtue enough to cancel all his crimes, and

procure the high approbation of the Roman see, by the murder and plunder of thousands of his Protestant subjects, and compelling the rest to seek exile as a refuge. To add insult to cruelty, an edict commanded them without delay to return to the bosom of the Church, whilst guards were stationed on the frontiers, to prevent the escape of those, who for conscience sake were willing to leave all behind them. Yet hundreds of thousands, by one means or other, found their way into the neighbouring nations, where they were received with friendship and affection, as exiles, as persecuted, as brethren. They left their ungrateful country, weakened by such immense emigrations, and carried their industry and resentment to strengthen the bands of her enemies. Even many of the Catholics condemned so gross a violation of the most solemn engagements; and all but the miserable bigots themselves considered the step impolitic, as unjust. It must be confessed the Protestants deserved the scourge, by the awful declensions evident among them. Some of their principal teachers had departed grievously from the reformed doctrines; and wished to bend to a nearer state of union with the idolatrous church, which they had renounced: and whilst the body of French Protestants approached the Arminian tenets, and softened down their professions to the more palatable, universal, and comprehending system, Switzerland also adopted them; and Geneva, the cradle of the reformed churches, before the end of the century, degenerated fast into the Arminian and

Pelagian system ; which we have seen naturally ending in our day in Socinianism and Deism.

The spirit of truth and godliness was not likely to flourish under such circumstances. The cause of the Protestants in France was reduced very low ; and those who remained, instead of brightening in the furnace of affliction, degenerated from the purity of the faith, as well as the spirituality of practice. The remaining Protestantism was little more than an inveterate hatred of popery. Some gracious ministers remained, but few, and driven into corners ; and though a remnant of the truly faithful was yet to be found, the days of youth were past, and grey hairs were upon them. They have lingered on declining to our days ; whether times of refreshing shall again come to them from the presence of the Lord is in the womb of time, but not out of the prospect of hope.

AN. 1655, 1686, 1696. The poor Waldenses, still maintaining in their sequestered vallies the Protestant doctrine, were hunted out by jesuitical malice, and cruelly treated by their popish duke of Savoy ; their utter extinction was threatened. The kind interposition of the English, Dutch, and Swiss governments preserved a few. Scattered and peeled, reduced in numbers, and destitute of pastors, without some gracious revival, they seemed approaching their final dissolution.

As reduced nearly was the once flourishing Church of the Palatinate. Under a Catholic Elector, and a series of oppressions, it hardly main-

tained a name among the nations where it had been first in honour. Nor were the other reformed communities exempt from the general declension. Hesse and the rest of the Calvinistic churches in Germany, exhibited no specimens of such life and activity as evidenced a vigorous frame : settling like their neighbours, into deadness of profession and formality of devotion.

Upon the whole, we may with grief lament the sad decay visible among all the Reformed Churches towards the expiration of the century. Great inroads made on the purity of the faith ; a growing neglect of all holy ordinances ; a grievous departure from the spirituality of a heavenly walk ; and an almost utter extinction of zeal for promoting the salvation of men's souls ; the ministry less evangelical, and the people lukewarm. I may add also a spirit of infidel philosophy arose, that tended to sap the vitals of revealed truth ; whilst the growing immorality and dissipation, produced a contempt of all strictness of religious profession, and stood ready to welcome the spreading poison of atheism, in order to remove the uneasy apprehensions of future responsibility. I wish I may be mistaken in my gloomy views of the period I am describing ; and that thousands may have been found left in our Israel, unnoticed and unknown, who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

### POLAND, TRANSYLVANIA, HUNGARY.

THERE were still vast nations bearing the Christian name, chiefly under governors of the

Romish pale, where a great mixture of Protestants and others were to be found, that classed neither with the Lutheran nor the reformed. Of these, *the Socinians* were at the beginning of this century, a considerable body in Poland and Transylvania : and from thence, as their head quarters, dispatched missionaries to the other parts of Europe ; but they proceeded in a line different from the other Protestants ; not affecting to lead the multitude by popular discourses, but to gain the great and literati by professing themselves the advocates for the noble powers of reason ; calling it the all-sufficient guide to truth ; and its uncontrolled exercise, the dignity of human nature. Revelation itself before this becomes superfluous ; and natural religion fully adequate to every purpose of salvation.

. But the hopes entertained from these ingenious missionaries, answered not the sanguine expectations of their fellows. A momentary prospect of success at Altorf, vanished, and Sohner and his pupils were expelled. Nor did other places furnish a more promising harvest. Even their university at Racow was dissolved and dispersed by the diet of Poland, for an insult offered by some of the wild students to a crucifix ; which so roused the wrath of the Catholics, that the Socinians were in consequence banished the kingdom. This edict was executed with the most unchristian severity.

AN. 1658. Dispersed and exiles, they fled into different countries, and after various efforts to obtain an establishment, were viewed by too suspi-

cious an eye to gain any settled resting place. The denial of Christ's divinity was then regarded as a crime so blasphemous, as no Christian state should tolerate : milder maxims have since prevailed : intolerance becomes not the advocates for truth and meekness.

But few communities of Socinians are known out of England, the colluvies of all sects and heresies. Here Biddle had a congregation under Cromwell, and Charles II. Nor hath there been wanting a succession of those who have maintained the leading features of the Socinian heresy, though not exactly agreed respecting the person of the Son of God. But all concur in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, denying the godhead of Christ, and renouncing all vicarious satisfaction from the sufferings of a Redeemer.

The Arians and Semi-arians were indeed more rife than the grosser but simpler Socinians : and many having received degrading opinions of Christ, rejected the Athanasian doctrine, and formed to themselves different modifications of deity subordinate. A system which, however much it prevailed, seems more irrational than the Unitarian or Socinian. Can we conceive any intermediate step between the true God and no God ?

The *Collegiants* of the United Provinces appear to be a branch of Socinianism, as their wide extended communion admits all who acknowledge the divinity of the Scriptures, and are not grossly immoral. And every man is permitted to speak

in their assembly, and even to oppose and argue, provided it be done with gentleness. As they have neither creeds nor consecrated teachers, their bond of union alone is voluntary association.

Madame Shurman, and the famed Bourignon, might be mentioned, ladies whose zeal and learning gave them importance ; and their aspiration after perfection flattered spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The leading tenet of the latter, better unfolded by Poiret, a disciple, and man of genius, is, that all true Christianity consists “ in immediate communion with the Deity, by internal feeling and impulse ;” approaching very nearly in its genius to the doctrine of Quakerism, and alike sprung from the same mystic stock : of which also among ourselves was the noted Joanna Lead, whose visions and predictions in that day, collected a number of absurd and credulous disciples. Folly and credulity will never cease in every age to afford abundant converts to fanaticism, and to whatever comes with the stamp of extraordinary.

## CENTURY XVIII.

## CHAPTER I.

## GENERAL PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH EXTERNALLY.

**A**S we approach nearer our own times, the more difficult it will be found to speak with impartiality. Far from being able to assure my readers of my own, I confess the greatest suspicion of myself, knowing the deceitfulness of the heart, and the amazing difficulty to divest ourselves, whether of the prejudices of education, or the pride of having emancipated ourselves from them ; not perceiving that we have only adopted a new prejudice for an old one. All therefore I can say, is, that I wish to know the truth, and to represent it without disguise ; and I shall feel no shame in acknowledging involuntary error ; be thankful for information ; ready to receive rebuke ; and more willing to correct my mistakes, than any kind friend, or undeserved enemy, may be to point them out. I am only sorry, that I am not more completely and fully furnished for the task ; but I shall endeavour to do my best, and hope for candor. In many particulars I shall speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen, for more than half the century.



As the western Christian world was now divided into two great communions, those who adhered to the Church of Rome, and those who acquired the name of Protestants, by their departure from it, these will demand our consideration separately and distinctly. The one forming a body of vast and extended members under a visible head, resident in the ancient metropolis of the Roman empire, which her arts and politics continued to maintain, if not over the persons, yet more despotically over the souls of men. The other a body, vast and extended also, but in numbers apparently inferior, and neither connected by members as homogeneous, nor under a visible chief. Yet solidly united in some *fundamental principles*, which formed a powerful, though invisible bond of attraction, amidst all apparent differences of opinion, kept them in a state of determined aversion to popery; and placed them in a constant sphere of repulsion from any approach to this greater body. The tyranny of Rome, the idolatry and superstitions, too glaring ever to be softened down into any point of contact, made the rent between them forever irreparable, without some prodigious change in the sentiments and views of the one or of the other. In some particulars the balance vibrated unequally. In point of learning, as deep scholars, profound mathematicians and acute metaphysicians, as well as every other branch of literature, the perfect freedom allowed to enquiry of every kind, and the general thirst for knowledge, as well as its diffusion through all Protestant countries, gave them vastly the pre-

ponderance in the scale. Not but that singular advances were made in the same studies in the Catholic countries : and philosophy cultivated with the greatest ardor ; but it was confined to a particular number of literati, not so generally diffused, and shackled by the dogmas of popery. It is amazing how much the reading the Scriptures in the mother-tongue of every Protestant nation, and the freedom of discussion of every subject, has led all ranks of men to a very great proportionable superiority over Papists in this respect. And what is more to be attended to, the first scholars, deepest in the philosophic school, among the Romanists, though they continued professionally to adhere to the religion of their country, yet sat very loose to any religion at all ; doubted of every thing but mathematical demonstration ; and, therefore, eyed the mysteries of the Church to which they belonged with silent contempt, and sometimes ventured a sarcastic sneer, which manifested a very feeble faith in the established doctrines and practices.

On the other hand, though the purity of morals had suffered an equal declension in the different churches, in point of zeal for the propagation of their own opinions, a decided inclination of the balance was still on the side of popery. Not only the inveteracy of ancient habits, gave a strong impulse to all the monastic orders, who must live on the emoluments of superstition ; but the society of Jesuits, instituted on purpose to support the sinking cause of Rome, particularly exerted them-

selves. They, indeed, displayed an unwearied activity, in any other cause, nobly exemplary. They stimulated the torpid zeal of Dominicans, Franciscans, and Capuchins ; roused them for the conflict, and called them to share in the merit and glory of bringing back the heretical deserters to the fold again ; or of enlarging the bounds of popish dominion in heathen and distant lands. Whereas, the love of Protestants was become lukewarm, nay, frozen up. Secure in their own enjoyments, they sat down in the pursuit of science, commerce, or gain ; and, too unconcerned about their own souls, entertained very little anxiety about the souls of others. The ministers of the different communions, watched over their own flocks, indeed, that no wolf might steal into the fold ; but they too frequently slumbered and slept ; and appeared more occupied about their temporal advantages, than the spiritual benefit of those entrusted to their care. Few had zeal to attempt conversions from popery, or to labor extensively. Besides, in the Protestant Churches, little or no provision being made for the particular purpose of extending the pale of evangelical truth, the Papists had an unspeakable advantage. They maintained a host of missionaries in every Protestant country, for making converts to Rome : always secretly at work, often openly, men of the most insinuating manners, trained up for this very object, in the wiles of controversy, to undermine the true faith, to place the popish opinions in the most favorable light, and to surprize the con-

sciences of the ill-informed, the scrupulous, and the disturbed.

It may be added, farther, that the great weight of interest lay on the popish side. A thousand allurements and advantages were held out by zealous papists, in order to make converts, even to the lowest of their tenants and people around them, such as every Protestant would have thought it a disgrace to employ, restrained by his principles from using other motives than argument and conviction on scriptural grounds. Nor did the idea of any meritorious service stimulate *his* efforts, whilst every Papist gained a proportionate off-set for all his own offences, and a fund of merit against the day of judgment, by every convert he could produce to popery, whatever were the means of conversion. Hence, not only in all the countries under popish governors, was every effort used with peculiar advantage to extend the dominion of Rome over the consciences of men; but in the Protestant kingdoms continual inroads were made, and converts gained. Indeed it is surprising, considering all circumstances, that their numbers have been so few, and the success so inadequate to the craft and diligence which have been employed by these emissaries.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE ROMISH CHURCH.

**T**HE commencement of this century beheld the Church of Rome apparently fixed upon an immoveable basis in Europe, stretching out her arms to the new world, and embracing both the Indies. By the strenuous efforts of her jesuitical physicians, her deadly wound appeared to be healed, and florid health restored to her countenance. But it was only the flush in the cheek of the hectic; the matter was secretly collecting in the vitals, and all the fearful consumptive symptoms, which we now witness, were preparing; and this from a source little apprehended; from men of no weight in any state, living chiefly by their pens, and supporting themselves by the diffusion of writings, pregnant with the virus of infidel philosophy. To appearance the state of popery seemed most auspicious: the Catholic interest rising high in the barometer of politics, and the Catholic religion spreading openly, or secretly, through all the corners of the earth; but a deadly worm preyed on the flourishing gourd, which overshadowed the papal throne.

Rome, the centre of Italy, looked round with exultation upon all the countries, from the Alps to

Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and other isles of the Mediterranean and Adriatic sea ; and not a soul dared peep, or a tongue mutter heretical pravity. The inquisition and the priests had effectually laid the axe to the root of the tree, and left not a trace of Protestantism remaining.

Spain and Portugal had exerted equal vigour, and Jesuits and Inquisitors ferreted out every lurking hole of heresy. Even the poor Jews were compelled to cross themselves, and with the more concentrated venom shut up in their hearts, to cover it with a greater zeal for superstition and the ceremonies of the Church.

France, aspiring to universal monarchy, and menacing the nations around with servitude, had begun effectually at home, by the most flagitious acts of despotic violence towards the Protestant heretics. The popish clergy and dragoons supplied the place of inquisitors. Not a congregation remained of all the flourishing churches which once spread over the bosom of that vast country. Their worship interdicted, their marriages declared illegal, and oppression in every shape and form, weighing them into the dust of death. Though their numbers, especially in the South of France, were great, they were compelled to hide all profession of their religion. It was death for a Protestant minister to exercise his functions, and imprisonment and confiscation, at least, for those who attended or concealed him. The despotic Lewis the Fourteenth, with his jesuit confessor, and their crew,

plotted night and day the utter extinction of the Protestant name ; and indeed had nearly effected it : and what is equally to be lamented, these sufferings of the Protestants, though they increased their abhorrence of popery, produced no spiritual change for the better, but for the worse. The peculiar doctrines of the reformed, had unhappily been debased from primitive purity, by an admixture of the Arminian leaven ; and the conduct of the Protestants in France displayed no such traits of spirituality, as manifested any striking improvement in moral excellence, or Christian graces. Their souls lost the vigour of religion, as their persons became more enslaved by despotism. The amazing increase of popery in France is incalculable ; from a third of the kingdom which had been enlightened, there were few men left, and those driven into holes and hiding places : for when the suppression of all public worship is long continued ; every means used to harrass and oppress on the one hand, and to seduce and allure on the other ; despair of help from without, and consciousness of inability to resist within, what can longer support the falling cause ? humanly speaking, it must sink under the burden.

The sovereigns of the House of Austria, as bigotted as ever, seconded with their weight every wile of ecclesiastical and jesuitical missionaries : through all the extent of their dominions, they persecuted the profession of Protestantism ; and endeavoured to extinguish every latent spark. Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, the Low Countries,

and all their other fiefs or dependencies, scarcely permitted a Protestant to breathe the vital air.

The other countries of popery, among which the Palatinate, once so famous for Protestantism, was now reckoned, used the same arts and oppressions ; and often no help remained for the poor people, but to forsake the ungrateful land of their nativity, and seek an asylum among strangers ; and even to transport themselves into the new world, in order to escape the malice of their persecutors.

And in the countries where Papists and Protestants were still mixed, and the same despotic proceedings were suspended by constitutional laws, treaties, or more commonly by political considerations, least their neighbours should interfere and support the oppressed ; still the weight of power, and the wiles of jesuitism and monkery, bore hard upon the consciences of men, and produced very lamentable effects in the perversion of many from the faith. Thus Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, suffered, and other countries in similar situations ; and many converts to popery are said to have enlarged the Romish pale. Nor in the Protestant countries themselves was this unobservable : and some sounded the alarm, though few lifted up the standard to resist the inroads of the enemy.

BRITAIN, now risen to be the first among the nations, held still in her bosom too many popish recusants, and enemies to the Protestant faith. In some of her dominions, the Catholics exceeded the Protestants, four or five to one, as in Ireland.



Numerous bodies remained in Scotland and England, which, though kept down by laws, too severe in many particulars, the lenity of the government scarcely ever put into execution, and connived at their transgression. Hence their worship, though forbidden, was maintained, it can hardly be said, secretly, as their houses of meeting were as well known as those of other dissenters; and the tolerating spirit universally diffused, not only protected them from insult, but embraced them with all the civilities of intercourse, and winked at the seductions which now and then appeared, through the secret machinations of their priests and emissaries. It must be acknowledged, that the balance was kept pretty nearly even, not so much by any conversions wrought through Protestant efforts, as by interested motives; when the nobles, to possess an hereditary seat in parliament; or the politic and ambitious to enter the House of Commons, or the magistracy, from which, by the profession of popery they were excluded, renounced one religion to embrace the other; without being a whit more Protestants afterwards, than they were Papists before. And as infidelity had made so great a progress in all lands, it was not at all to be wondered, that men of no principle embraced that profession of religion, which most corresponded with their avarice or ambition. To these chiefly in protestant countries were the conversions from popery to be traced.

The case was much the same in Holland and Switzerland. The northern Protestants were either

less annoyed with the horde of Jesuits, or more tenacious to suppress a religion which they feared and hated.

Yet the progress of popery in Europe, though great, bore a small proportion to the spread of it in distant lands. From Canada to Louisiana, the French had erected an empire that threatened the British colonies; and their numerous emissaries among the Indian tribes, had brought many of them to the name of Christian, and to baptism; and, in order to make them surer tools for their grand monarch, had enlisted them under the banners of Rome.

But the vast foreign empires were those of Portugal and Spain, especially the latter, comprehending the whole continent of America on the Pacific Ocean, from north to south; at least from California to the extremities of Chili; and on the other side, all the immense regions that lie round the bay of Mexico, with the vast and numerous islands, besides the unknown boundless regions to the south. The Brazils, with their dependencies, Portugal occupied: both nations were the obsequious votaries of Rome. With inquisitorial watchfulness, hosts of jesuits and friars of every rank and colour, (this being the paradise of monkery) took care that not a spark of Protestant pravity should ever enter their dominions; determined to maintain inviolate the devotion and profligacy, the ignorance and purity of the Catholic faith, which distinguished these favoured lands. The vast

Phillippine Islands enjoyed the same advantages ; and every where, negroes or Indians, slaves or free men, increased the number of Romish subjects.

China was now filled with missionaries and converts, and threatened almost to become Christian ; and in the East Indies, especially on the coasts of Malabar, and even to the gulf of Ormus, the zealous missionaries erected their cross, and enlisted a numerous host under their banners. Africa afforded gold and ivory, and slaves and converts. The coasts of Mozambique, and those westward, washed by the waves of the Atlantic, heard and received the disciples of Loyola. Indeed, they had strong inducements to quicken their diligence and extend their empire : for, besides the inestimable benefits of popery conferred upon these various colours of mankind, they contrived to make it answer to their own order, and to secure to themselves commercial advantages, from which one of their first objects was to exclude all their monkish rivals ; and to be the princes as well as priests of those whom they had won to the profession of the popish faith.

I am obliged to cast only a rapid glance on these conquests that encircle the terrestrial globe ; in all which, at the beginning of this century, popery had erected her dominion ; and that principally by the means of her jesuit missionaries. Whoever considers this extension of empire, will be ready to cry out, as it is written, “ What city is like unto this great city ! ” and how natural was the elation of her pride, that said, “ I sit a queen, and am no

widow, and shall see no sorrow." But her day was coming, and to every true Protestant it must be matter of exultation to trace the steps of her fall, and to see the image of iron and clay smitten, by the stone hewn out of the mountain without hands. "Sing ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it : "rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on "her."

Amidst all the apparent greatness and glory of Rome, various secret causes were working her dissolution.

The kings of the earth, though they gave their power to the beast, for purposes of their own ambition, yet in a variety of contests had learned the contemptibility of papal anathemas ; and this peculiar benefit the Reformation had generally produced, that the popish monarchs themselves had been less submissive, and more decisive, so that in their several kingdoms, all interference with their governments became not the Spiritual Father ; and therefore, whilst they continued to kiss the feet of the Pontiff himself, and profess the most devoted reverence for his person, they made no scruple to despise the mandates issued by him, thus making a difference between the Pope and the papal see.

The humiliating submissions of Rome to the insolent monarch of France, we have seen. Naples, Sardinia, Portugal, Spain, all in their turns, wherever their regalities, privileges, and immuni-

ties, were trenched upon, clipped the wings of the dragon, and left him only the shadow of that power, which, before the Reformation, had been exercised without controul. Every dispute demonstrated the increasing feebleness of the papal arm, when opinion no longer supported the terror of his anathemas.

The inquisition in Spain and Portugal, became a state engine directed by government, and not an independent court controuled by foreign emissaries.

The sharp disputes which reigned between the members of the Church, Jesuits and Dominicans, Jesuits and Jansenists, contributed greatly, by the writings on both sides, to open men's eyes, and to lead them to the exercises of their own understandings in the matters disputed ; especially, they tended to bring into discredit, that body, of all others the most dangerous, because most servile to the Romish pontiffs. The jealousy of the monkish tribes, and all their weight and influence at Rome, backed the bitter accusations against the Jesuits, respecting their foreign missions. China, by these disputes, became subject to different decisions : sometimes the Pontiff's mandates were obeyed, sometimes the Jesuits resisted. The issue was the expulsion of all the missionaries, and the vanishing of all their churches, as the meteor of the night.

Their bitter persecution of the Jansenists awakened a return of enmity. Though their power prevailed at Rome, and with a bigot king, yet many who were disgusted with the bulls issued,

looked to a future council, unable to procure present redress. Thus was there roused up a spirit of resentment against these jesuitical persecutors, that only waited the moment of vengeance. AN. 1713.

The famous book of Quesnel, which produced the bull "UNIGENITUS," so called from the word with which it begins, deserves a moment's attention, as probably to this, eventually, the fall of this society may be traced. Into this book were elegantly introduced the principles for which Janse-  
nius had been already condemned: and the style was so pleasing, and the annotations on the New-Testament so spiritual and animated, that it was read with the greatest delight. It had reached Rome; and Renaudot, a French Abbé, going on a visit to the Pope, found him reading the new publication. "This," says he to the Abbé, "is an excellent book. We have nobody at Rome capable of writing in this manner. I wish I could engage the author to reside here." The eagle eyes of the Jesuits had seen through the design of Quesnel, to give weight and consequence to their Jansenist enemies, whom they wished to crush. Their cries therefore of heresy surrounded the Pontiff; and though the book was so excellent before, they insisted on his reading it again with jesuit spectacles, and extracting from it, and condemning one hundred and one propositions as heretical, or of heretical tendency. This bull set the kingdom of France in a flame. A vast multitude had read and approved father Quesnel: cardinals, bishops, and clergy innumerable, perceived

in the work singular unction ; and not viewing it through the same glass, could discover nothing like heretical pravity in it. The Protestants, by this bull were convinced no abuse at Rome would ever be corrected ; and the moderate Papists, who were not Jansenists, were highly offended to see those doctrines of predestination and grace, so peremptorily condemned as heresy, which the Fathers, St. Augustin, and the Church, had been supposed to hold as orthodox.

The dispute was long and sharp in France. The Jesuits carried the day. It became the law of the land. You must subscribe the bull *Unigenitus*, or have no sacraments. Oppressions, banishments, excommunications followed. The opposition made, and sometimes the means employed, were, it must be confessed, highly discreditable to the Jansenist cause. They had better tempered weapons to defend themselves, than visions and miracles at the tomb of the Abbé Paris. These indeed they also wielded, and with effect. They laid open the moral system of the Jesuits, and stamped it with deserved infamy. They awakened the attention of the popish powers to their political conduct and designs. They charged them with erecting in Paraguay, an independent sovereignty ; and under pretence of preserving their converts from the contaminating examples of Portuguese and Spaniards, of having excluded them from entering their missions. The mercantile transactions of this wily body excited the jealousy of the commercial world, Under the cloak of piety and conversions, they

endeavoured to monopolize the trade of the countries which they had reduced to their obedience. The gain of the merchant, as well as the authority of the monarch, thus trenched upon, raised an host of irritated and powerful opponents. Suspicious connections with those who attempted to assassinate the King of Portugal ; and open resistance to the Spanish and Portuguese forces, on fixing the limits of their several settlements in South America, issued in their complete destruction. By a sudden and unexpected stroke, without consulting Rome, the Catholic princes conspired their ruin, and they were all seized and banished in the same moment from Spain, Portugal, and France ; brought home by ship loads from all the foreign dominions of these powers ; and packed off for Rome their protectress ; but now unable longer to defend her jesuitical satellites. After a while the concurrent demands of the popish monarchs, compelled the reluctant pontiff Ganginelli, to dissolve the society, lest jesuitical malice and revenge might issue in some destructive enterprize, unless crushed never to rise up again. AN. 1773.

With them the glory of Rome departed. The great barrier was broken down which held the consciences of men enslaved to the Roman see ; and freer scope was given to the infidel philosophy to lift up its head with confidence, when it had these arguses no longer watching the approaches to heresy.

Of all the causes which have contributed to the humiliation of Rome, none so effectually operated



as the prevailing tenets of infidelity ; which diffused themselves among all the literati, and most distinguished geniuses of the Romish Church. The progress was silent, but wide. The famous, or infamous Rousseau, D'Alembert, Helvetius, and that most agreeable, but seductive and unprincipled writer, Voltaire, contributed to charge the mine, and lay the train, which could not fail, with the first match kindled, to explode and overturn not only all the trumpery of popery, but to raise a spirit equally inimical to all despotic governments ; nay, threatening an universal revolution in society, by the changes it was suited to produce, both in religion and politics. Lord Chesterfield, a pupil of this school, when in France, long ago foresaw the inevitable consequences which we have witnessed. And what is singular enough, the wide spreadings of Arminianism, which infected the Protestant countries, have begun even in them to give way to the more philosophical doctrine of *necessity*, leading to fatalism, and ending in atheism. None gave greater weight to these opinions than Frederic the Great of Prussia, the patron and high priest of infidelity : he contributed to spread it by his own writings and example, and to protect it by every encouragement. Though France was the fruitful source, Berlin was the focus where the scattered rays were collected, and where they beamed with peculiar lustre. The superior orders of the Romish clergy, themselves, having drank into this philosophical spirit, made no vigorous efforts to suppress its progress, and little ap-

prehended the fatal consequences to themselves, to which it was imperceptibly leading. The life of dissipation which prevailed also, in so fearful a manner, destructive of every precept of the gospel, prepared willing disciples for infidel principles. It was abundantly easier, and it must be confessed much more rational, to suppose that there was nothing after death, and so to quiet every uneasy apprehension, than to receive the absurdities of purgatory, and be at the pains of penance, or submit to the purchase of indulgences.

Moreover, the increase of knowledge in general, guarded men from the pious frauds which had been such powerful engines of sacerdotal delusion. The priests themselves began to blush at their own tricks; and all the men of intelligence would cordially have wished to get rid of them; but they feared the people, whose credulity required imposition. So they wisely, in their ideas, tolerated the prevailing superstitions, to avoid what they regarded as the greater evil, the acknowledging papal fallibility, the loosening the pontifical dominion, and emboldening the prying eye of curiosity to look into its abuses.

Owing to these and a variety of other causes, the papal throne sunk in its revenues, as in its authority—little flowed into its coffers. One kingdom after another stopped the fatal drain, which had poured from every land into that gulph the wealth of nations, to be dissipated by nepotism, or a bastard progeny.

But above all other causes of the humiliation of papal domination, the most menacing and destructive have arisen from the ambitious rulers of France, who, under pretext of liberty, having seized the government, erected a tyranny more bloody and oppressive than that against which they revolted. After murdering their sovereign, plundering and degrading the nobles, levelling every distinction of rank, overturning every ancient establishment at home, abolishing the convents, shutting up the churches, banishing or murdering, with the most inhuman cruelty, all the ecclesiastics who refused to bow to their dictates, they burst as a torrent on the neighboring nations, every where desolating the Romish Church, and sweeping away its trumpery; melting down the silver saints and their shrines; casting the bells into cannon, and converting the churches and convents into barracks or work-shops. Thus suddenly all the immense wealth of the clergy dissolved as snow before the sun-beams. The whole ecclesiastical property seized, sold and dissipated; religion was left to take care of itself. The bigotted country of the Netherlands has shared the same fate with Savoy, the sad scene of former bloody persecutions; and still the gigantic ogre of revolution stalked on over the prostrate and trembling nations around, and all Christendom stood aghast whereunto this would grow. Germany dismembered, Switzerland subjugated, and all Italy plundered, from Milan to Naples, and crumbled into pieces, under the fleeting name of republics, and after the model and under the control of their harsh step-mother:

Kings hurled from their thrones, the Pope himself a prisoner, and Rome reduced to be an inconsiderable appendage, and subject to the vaunted Great Nation; whilst Spain, trembling, submits to become little better than a dependent province, and Portugal attempted to purchase a temporary respite, dreading to be swallowed up by the monster. Amidst these convulsions, expectation stretched out her neck, as if listening for the angel's voice, when he should cry, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen;" for it appeared highly probable that the time was come for the fulfilment of the prophetic word, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." A sudden reverse, in which nationally we cannot but rejoice, seems in its consequence for a moment to suspend the threatened destruction of popery. Whether the carved work which hath been broken down with these axes and hammers, can be repaired, and the foundations which have been undermined, be propped up a little longer, only the spirit of prophecy can foretell. Every true Protestant cannot but wish that God would hasten the period when the popish power shall fall, never to rise up again, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

Meantime it may not be unprofitable to pass in review the several popish countries, and the state of religion in each of them.

## CHAPTER III.

## ITALY.

**I**TALY, the chief region of papal empire, has been justly branded by one of our noble authors, as the seat of "*illiberal vices*," which walk by the side of superstition in the open front of day, and refuse to be ashamed.

Italy comprises,

## 1st. NAPLES AND ITS DEPENDENCIES.

These, long held as fiefs of Rome, after undergoing a variety of changes, rested under a branch of the Bourbon Spanish family, and for some time have enjoyed independence. Many disputes with Rome, were in general carried against the pontiffs, from whom at last they have emancipated themselves entirely, and pay no longer the former mark of feudal homage. In these countries not a spark of evangelical truth remains. They are sunk into the lowest dregs of popery. For some time past indeed they have begun to be initiated into the mysteries of modern philosophy, and dared to disbelieve. Many of the superior ranks of life, the nobles, the military, the literati, and the ecclesiastics, were nearly, if we believe Brydone's Travels, as infidel as himself.

A *ridiculous scene*, which a friend of mine witnessed, as he was visiting one of the beautiful churches of Naples, will give a pretty strong specimen of their religion. A woman opened a closet, and took out an image of the Virgin ; after stripping off her old cloaths, she put on her a silk sacque, a hoop-petticoat, and very fine laced double ruffles. Presently several friars entered the church, and producing their books, united in supplications around her. They rose from their knees, tapped their snuff-boxes, and talked and laughed together, whilst the woman unrobed the lady, and restored her to her former place, and her old cloaths again. A Protestant could not behold such worship without mingled pity and derision. In order to be fully ascertained respecting *indulgences*, he went to the office, and for two zequins he purchased a plenary remission of all sins, for himself, and any two other persons of his friends or relations, whose names he was empowered to insert, and who might be in need of so convenient a certificate for the porter of Paradise, St. Peter. That in the end of the enlightened eighteenth century, such folly can be propagated, is, to us who live far from the scenes of superstition, surprising ; but countenanced there by priestcraft, general habit and education, the breath of suspicion dared not impeach the power of ghostly absolution : and shocking to relate, the first ecclesiastic of the kingdom, was compelled to work annually the miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, or the populace would fancy some fatal calamity threatened the state. What the manners of such a country must

be, are easily supposable. Thither those of our own retire, who, looked upon with horror for their unnatural crimes, need there no cover for their abominations, and are equally well received in all company.

## 2d. ROME, AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.

The states immediately under the Romish temporal dominion, still vast and fertile, were governed and plundered by ecclesiastics, who held all the first places of power and profit. The beautiful campagna of Rome, indeed, once so abundant, is now become an unhealthy morass, where even to sleep a single night is dangerous : and the spectres, which necessity compels to abide there, seem all walking in their shrouds to the tomb. What the state of popery must be under those more immediately called to countenance every fraud of superstition, is evident. Yet at Rome itself greater liberty was allowed than either in Spain or Portugal ; and even the Jews had an allotted quarter, where they lived protected by the government. I will not say that there was more need of courtezans at Rome than elsewhere, because of the thousands of dignified celibitaries, cardinals, bishops, and others ; but since they must be tolerated, the ghostly father prudently drew a revenue from prostitution, and licensed the stews. Perhaps in no Catholic country had infidelity made a greater progress than at Rome itself ; but since by this craft they had their gain, it would have been the height of imprudence to rend the veil, for the pop-

place to look into the sanctuary ; and therefore, they wisely continued the tawdry mask of superstition over the face of impiety ; and none bowed more lowly to the image, or performed their devotions with greater decency and propriety than those who laughed at their own absurdities. But though truth was thus fallen in the streets, and equity could not enter ; the army of booted missionaries effected for a while the conversion of the people from superstitions, which Gallic warriors had learned to despise ; and when such edifying examples were before the vulgar, and the same arms would raise them to equality with the proudest, the invitation was too tempting not to be acceded to, and the happy fraternization promised to be cordially embraced through all the countries of Italy. Naples was last drawn into the vortex. The strong hand of power suppressed for a while the revolutionary movements which had manifested themselves, and only waited for the auspicious moment, when they might be displayed with effect : at last it came, and the monarch fled. The kingdom ravaged, plundered, exhausted, and but just recovered by a change as sudden as the revolution which had preceded, will not improbably be replunged into the same profligacy and superstition as before, and the blood of St. Januarius liquefy again in the warm hands of the archbishop.

### 3d. THE UPPER REGIONS OF ITALY.

These first felt the ravages of Gallic arms. Milan, Venice, Piedmont, Genoa, Tuscany, fell suc-



cessively before them. The Church and its revenues afforded the richest plunder, and ecclesiastical magnificence faded before these disciples of the new philosophy, the Goths and Vandals of the eighteenth century. For a considerable time before their irruption, the Church indeed, almost throughout all the Italian states, had become an engine of politics ; for though they professed obedience to the Roman pontiff, only so much respect was paid to his mandates, as consisted with their own sovereignty and interests. This was well known at Rome, and therefore the popes had for a great while used only intrigue, to carry the points which they had no longer power to enforce. The thunders of excommunication had of late slept in the Vatican ; and the menaces of authority given place to paternal admonition. But impotence once discovered, provokes insult ; and *that* in many instances the popes had been compelled to wink at, and watch for a happier moment to recover their former authority. They had parted with none of their claims, nor descended from their high supremacy over all persons ecclesiastical or civil, but having lost the power of executing their anathemas, and the pillars of their throne being no longer upheld by blind veneration, every asinine heel was insolently lifted up against the sick lion.

What will be the new order of things, and whither the rapid changes succeeding each other will lead, time must discover. The revenues of the Church seem to have received an irrecoverable shock ; and power and dignity are faded, when not

supported by wealth and opinion. The spread of infidelity and atheism is visible, the glimmering of gospel truth no where apparent. It was said at Milan, a Protestant Church was opened ; but the Protestants of such an army must be a spurious race, and can hardly leave any trace of truth behind them. War is always the parent of wickedness. Those who have been taught to despise the frauds of popery and its fopperies, even when they return to its profession, will be but half papists. The bands of veneration for superiors have been loosed on one side, and the dread of what is past will put a bridle on the more glaring abuses of authority for the future. Though a new pope should therefore be again enthroned and restored to his capital, the day of papal dominion seems to be past, and he would only shine as the sun shorn of his beams. It is not a day that gives hope of replenishing the coffers of ecclesiastics ; and all false piety is sunk to so low an ebb, that monasteries will hardly ever more be found, or scarcely repaired. The drones of the hive are driven out, and many of them killed by the winter's cold. It will not be easy to repeople the deserted cells—the rising generation have learned another lesson ; and Protestantism is not more inimical to monkery than infidelity.

Hence, during the whole of this century, no attempts have been made to pour forth new orders of monks upon the world. On the contrary, interest and politics have led to the suppression of monasteries in all the various nations of popery. The life itself has lost all the foolish veneration once

attached to it : these cells of celibitaries have been for a long while filled with the daughters of those, who could make but a slender provision for them, the younger sons of numerous families, or of the peasants, who were ambitious of having an ecclesiastic among their relations.

The great preferments have long since ceased to be the meed of distinguished merit of any kind. They have followed the politics of courts ; served the purposes of the prime ministers ; or been bestowed on the relations of favourites, and those who could make interest with such as had the disposal of them. Hence less of the spirit of the order hath stimulated the sacerdotal tribe ; and throughout Italy a multitude of men hath arisen high in science, and all attainments of human literature, such as Boscovitch, Beccaria, and others, who have perhaps unintentionally rent the veil of ignorance, the covering cast over all that people, and let in such a beam of day as hath tended to produce more accurate investigation, and consequently to detect the false principles, which custom had established, and thus radically to sap the veneration for opinions sanctified by long prescription. The ravages which have lately succeeded, and the partizans to democracy which have been gained, cannot but add weight to the descending scale. Rome may be rescued from its plunderers, and another pontiff enthroned, but the spirit which they have diffused, and the opinions they have disseminated, will not be so easily eradicated ; and probably prepare for farther changes. Happy ! if truth and righteous-

ness at last shall lift up their banners at Rome ; and that gospel which Paul preached, and his beautiful epistle contains, be again the language of her ministers, and the faith of her people.

## SPAIN.

BEYOND the mountains, the papal power seemed even more inveterately established, than in the nearer subjects of the metropolis. During the reign of jesuitism, Spain and Portugal exhibited countries of servile obedience, and bigotted superstition ; and they are still the last in the train of science, as well as truth. The disputes, indeed, about privileges and immunities, were terminated in their favour ; but to need a dispute about national rights, which they should have admitted no foreign power to contest with them, bespoke the state of subjection in which they had been held. No appearance of evangelical doctrine hath hitherto in these lands dared to lift up its head. The inquisition, though lately palsied in its operations, was still ready to receive every denunciation, and suppress the first movements of heresy. The wiser and best informed, lamented the dreadful injury done to the kingdom of Spain, by expelling the most useful and industrious of its subjects. Olivado, and other patriotic ministers, endeavoured to revive the torpid state of agriculture, by inviting some German Protestants, with the promise of protection, to cultivate the desert lands of Sierra Morena : but this scheme was utterly frustrated, and himself brought before the inquisitors for he-

resy. A late intelligent traveller, who resided some time in Spain, and had the fullest opportunity to acquaint himself with the state of religion, and the manners of its inhabitants, assured me, that Spain appeared a hundred years in ignorance behind the other nations of Europe ; but in dissipation far exceeded them. The cavaliere servente, now more agreeably occupies the place of the duenna. It would be a disgrace for a wife to be seen with her husband in public : even in his own house, he never presumes to intrude into the lady's apartment, when her cavaliere attends her toilette ; indeed, he is himself employed in discharging that office with some other married female, without reproach, and without recrimination. Yet the offices of piety are performed with wondrous regularity. At mass the cavaliere servente attends his innamorata as a part of his duty ; and a system is established, of impurity and religion, of devotion and profligacy, of which, bad as we are, we have no parallel. Such a country, half over-run with French armies, and submitting, by an inglorious peace, to become the satellite of the new republic, cannot but be inoculated with their principles. The very state of their court, the manner in which the Duke of Alcudia, now the Prince of Peace, once a lifeguard-man, lives with the Queen ; the imbecility of the King, and the despotic power of the favourite, all suggested the probability of changes, which even the rooted bigotry of the country will be unable to resist. It is said, very lately, that the inquisition is shut up, after having for a considerable while ceased to entertain the

people with the pious spectacles of the *auto-de-fe*, or the solemn burning of those convicted of heretical pravity : and that now it is forbidden to proceed on any farther process. It had been for some time before under the check and controul of government. The old woman at Rome can no longer cover her babes of blood with her mantle of superstition. Her inquisitors are suppressed. Yet little knowledge or godliness have made their appearance. The new philosophy, as in other countries, has infected the literati ; and all who are sent by the government to travel for improvement, are sure to carry home with them a more than proportional share of infidelity, together with the knowledge and arts which they have acquired ; and thus every day the foundations will probably be laid for the same changes as have marked her terrible neighbour.

### PORTUGAL.

PORTUGAL, defended by our heretical arm, from the easy conquest it held out to her more potent neighbour, continued in the same state of mental and political languor and imbecility. Having contributed as much as any court to the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the extinction of their order, she has not yet risen above her long rooted prejudices, and subjection to sacerdotal imposition. I am assured, that it is astonishing to see with what rooted aversion and abhorrence they behold us as heretics, though their defenders, and standing in the gap to prevent their being swallowed up by

the Spaniards, their enemies. As a *State*, their feebleness is ready to leave them a prey to the first invader. As a *Church*, no place affords a more dreary solitude than Portugal : nor have I heard, or read of any effort made, for ages past, to introduce a ray of evangelical truth among them. The Scriptures are a book sealed, hid, and interdicted ; gloomy superstition spreads her wings ; ignorance, idolatry, profligacy, and cruelty, brood beneath them : not a reforming spirit dares murmur a doubt of the absurdest dogmas, or a suggestion to redress the most glaring sacerdotal abuses. Probably Portugal and her dependencies will be last among the nations reclaimed from ignorance, and emancipated from the servitude of popery.

### FRANCE.

Comparatively, FRANCE has long been but half the subject of Rome : always contending for her Gallican liberties, though jesuitical influence obtained great sacrifices : yet such was the discontent, and such the decisions of the clergy in this kingdom, that some occasion of fresh provocation only was wanting to have withdrawn them long since wholly from the Romish yoke. Nothing could speak this language stronger, than the proposal made by the famous DUPIN, with other doctors of the Sorbonne, to our Archbishop Wake, for the union of the churches ; AN. 1720. and though the matter proceeded not to any formal treaty, yet the preliminaries which were mentioned by the Gallic clergy, as matters concedable, show

that the project was disappointed more by court intrigues, and the fear of the prime minister, the wretch DUBOIS, losing his cardinal's hat, than from any aversion which the Gallican Church rulers seem to have had to set up for themselves.

Whether policy or candor contributed to the change, after the death of Louis the Fourteenth, the Protestants met with milder treatment in France ; their meetings were connived at by the government ; and where a malignant bishop would have put the laws in force against them, he was often withheld by the fear of displeasing his superiors : and thus without toleration, nay, in the face of the most tyrannical laws, they assembled, and often in great multitudes. I think a friend of mine, not many years ago, attended their preaching in a wood, not far from Nismes, where about ten thousand were supposed to be present, without the least interruption. This spirit of lenity had much increased after the destruction of the Jesuits ; and a scheme of toleration was spoken of, and generally approved, before the late convulsions shook the State to its centre, and the Church to the ground, and for a while destroying all worship, left every man to his own religion.

It is very natural, that the Protestants, so long and grievously oppressed, should lend a cordial hand to a revolution, which must restore them to an equality with their fellow-citizens ; and that their hatred of Rome should make them rejoice in her fall : and if I may believe the assurances of the emigrant priests, the Jansenists readily took the



oaths to government, and the churches from whence they were expelled. In all my researches I have never been able, among the multitudes I conversed with, to meet one Jansenist emigrant priest, though I greatly desired it. Probably they were not sorry to see their oppressors humbled, however grieved they might be in the event, to behold all religion overturned.

As perfect toleration is said to be allowed to all who are careful not to interfere with government, I should hope some societies of real Christians still edify one another, whilst they drop a tear over the miseries of their country, and sigh for peace.

The desolations wrought by republican principles, as well as arms, have been, as we have seen, the principal means of the destruction of the papal power among the nations which the French have over-run. In their own land the whole fabric of popery is levelled, and hardly nominal and constitutional bishops remain. Liberty is the only shrine professed to be frequented by Frenchmen, without perceiving the chains under which they groan, the slaves of corruption, and the tools of the ambitious. But God will bring good out of all the evil permitted, and a glorious Church shall come forth, I trust and pray, from the furnace, when the dross of popery and superstition, and a worldly sanctuary shall be purged away "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." It is said, that three millions of persons professing Protestantism still remain in France, though I should

think their numbers exaggerated. How numerous the Jansenists may be, I am unacquainted ; they would certainly welcome reformation. The amazing influx of foreign Protestants, on a peace, cannot fail to be great : and if there be no dominant state religion, and a regular clergy maintained by the public ; or at least, if free toleration be granted to all, I have no doubt the better half of the kingdom, whatever government may finally be established, will continue the profession of Christianity under some form : and should even monarchy be restored with the hierarchy, the very state of the nation will probably require many modifications, and at least some such privileges as the edict of Nantz admitted. I am free to confess my apprehensions, that true evangelical religion will not as yet be generally that of France, or of any other country ; I can only hope, that popery may cease to have the ascendant, though tolerated like the rest, and suffered to die a natural, and not a violent death. I am seeking the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven ; and I trust it will be found, “ when the Lord writeth up the people, that this and that man were born *there*.”

Nothing can be more desolate than the present state of the Church in France ; on the side of profession of godliness scarcely any appears ; if there be any real Christianity remaining, it is concealed : the torrent still runs so strong against *all* religion. On the side of morals nothing can be more deplorable. A military government and its supporters, share the spoils of the crown, the nobles, and eccle-

siastics; and spend with equal prodigality what they have acquired by means so unjust. The Churches are deserted and shut up; new play-houses, and places of entertainment, are opened and crowded. Divorce is allowed on the most frivolous pretexts; and thus the sanctity of marriage destroyed: the dissolution of manners produces no shame, when countenanced by general practice and approbation. Republican virtue in France is very different from the stern, austere, and frugal manners of ancient Rome. They copy the luxurious Sybarites; and what they hold by a tenure, probably as precarious as unjust, they wish to employ in present enjoyment: a few, perhaps, providently lay up a hoard for an evil day. The general, established, and fashionable system evidently is, to live without God in the world, and eat and drink because to-morrow they die.

### AUSTRIA.

AUSTRIA, always a bigotted adherent to the Romish pontiff, during a great part of this century, beheld the sceptre swayed by a woman, who, though compelled to support her tottering authority by Protestant alliances, ceased not her servile subjection to ecclesiastical superstitions. She was a rigid Catholic, and a devotee: but the spread of contagious infidel philosophy penetrated her court, and seized upon her successor. Unable, during her life-time, to take any steps, as she was too jealous of her authority to permit interposition, Joseph, her son, meditated designs to be executed

the moment of her decease. Emulous of the fame of the great Frederick, the rival and plunderer of his house, he planned conquests over his Ottoman neighbours, and the spoil of the useless convents. His violent reforms convulsed his distant provinces. Having destroyed the barrier towns, and suppressed many of the religious houses, he ruined his own defences, whilst he alienated the affections of his bigotted subjects. The spirit of revolt followed. Disappointment broke his spirits ; his health suffered in his Turkish campaigns, and he fell the martyr to his own ambitious projects ; leaving the Netherlands in a state of convulsion, preparative to all the miseries to which they have since been exposed.

Yet Rome severely suffered. The suppliant Pope visited the infidel Emperor, in hopes to obtain by intreaty, what he could no longer command by anathemas. He came too late : the day of his influence was passed with the mother :—the son was a papist of a different religion ; and chose to pursue his own purposes, very unconcerned about the interests of the Church. So the old man returned as he came. I am not certain whether he left his benediction or his malediction behind him. To Joseph they would have been exactly of the same import. But these things loosened the foundations of papal authority. Despised, and without influence, the Pope silently submitted, and Austria paid him only such respect as suited her own interest or inclination. Thus every where the bands of allegiance were broken ; and if true religion

found no protection, the Pontiff sunk into contempt, though popery remained.

## POLAND.

THIS great kingdom once subsisted, subject to the papal dominion. It hath ceased to be numbered among the nations. Poland, long the prey to ambitious competitors for an elective sovereignty, hath fallen into the claws of three eagles, that have divided the spoil between them. For this sovereignty, Augustus of Saxony, basely bartered his religion, and with the throne of Poland annexed to his hereditary dominions, hoped to transmit them together to his family. The popery remains—the throne is lost. Are they ashamed to return again to the Protestant pale, since their heads have ceased to wear a crown ?

In the treaty of Oliva, guaranteed by the adjoining powers, the Poles admitted the toleration of dissidents of all denominations. The most numerous body of these was of the Greek Church, though there were many of other communions, Lutherans, and reformed. Even the Jews in no small number found protection in Poland : but the dominant religion remained popish, always insolent, and often oppressive. Intestine divisions, bred by ambition, rent the land. A patriot king, labouring to enlarge the bounds of liberty, was unable to controul the spirit of Polish licentiousness. The intrigues of traitors to their country first ravaged the provinces, and then called in aid from those

who only meant to carve for themselves. The inability to resist these intruding neighbours became evident, from the first partition of the country. The remainder rested not long an independent sovereignty. The three mighty monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, agreed to divide the whole between them *for the good of the people*, dethroned the worthy Poniatowski, and parcelled out his dominions according to their several conveniences and contiguity. An act the most unprincipled, the most atrocious, and such as never was committed by the most infamous robber which the gallows ever bore: but they were emperors and kings, and to suspect their justice, would be treason against their majesties. Religion could be no object of theirs; and so, eventually, the cause of God and truth was benefited by their ambition. Popery no longer possessed the power, or revenues, which could make it formidable. Each sovereign took what he liked, and only left such a provision for religious worship as his own liberality allowed. Toleration was a necessary consequence. A Protestant and a Greek must prevent their subjects from the oppressions of popery; and a Catholic monarch himself was compelled, politically to afford the same indulgence, that he might not lose the Protestants or Greeks, who could so easily have taken refuge with their neighbours and countrymen. Thus the earth helped the woman. No more money went to Rome—no more dominion could she exercise. They who had seized the lands, chose themselves to exercise the supremacy.

Thus Poland became lost to Rome as a kingdom of its dependence ; and the subjects, barring the national injustice committed, became certainly capable of enjoying more happiness and religious liberty than ever before. I am considering the real Church of God as the desirable object, and as such, hope that much has been gained by the subjugation of Poland : and, that in the great system of true religion, this event may be reckoned among those which are auspicious ; as casting down the barriers of papal power and persecution, and opening a freer course for the word of God, where it may run and be glorified.

### GERMANY.

THE princes and prelates of the popish communion, true to their principles, during a great part of this century, continued to oppress and harrass their Protestant subjects, and to compel numerous emigrations. Such were the poor *Palatins*, whom our hospitable land received ; and the *Saltzburghers*, who found an asylum in Holland, and Prussia, and other countries around them. Will men, will those professing the name of Christians, forever bite and devour one another ? Shall bigotry, blind to its own interest, glut its malice by murdering its best subjects ? But remonstrance is vain, where popery, only intent on furious conversions, will hear no reply, but turn or burn. Yet, in the progress of years, a gentler spirit hath entered ; the increase of knowledge, and the philosophic influence diffused, have rendered men more tolerant, if not more re-

ligious : they are become wiser, if not better ; and for some time have ceased so bitterly to goad those whom it ought to have been their first care to cherish. Matters are, indeed, just now wonderfully embroiled ; in the present sinking state of the Church of Rome, it is more than probable, that Germany will see some of its Catholic bishops exchanged for temporal principalities ; and not impossible but that the matters of religion may be put out of the question ; and the bishoprics own subjection to Protestant princes : and if this alteration of governors introduce a more general toleration, and the banishment of persecution for conscience sake, that is all which true religion seeks or wishes, and the Church of Christ will be so far advantaged.

On the whole, from this review of the Romish Church, and the particular members of which it is composed, I think it evidently appears, that the cause of God and truth has wonderfully advanced in the general scale of the nations, owing subjection to, or rather in union with, Rome. Her power is weakened, her riches dissipated, her subjects diminished, and her fall, I hope, approaching. When this desirable event shall be consummated, he only knows, who sitteth on the throne, rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.



## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE GREEK AND EASTERN CHURCHES.

**T**HE very little communication which subsists between Europe and the greater part of the Ottoman Empire, affords few materials for the history of the Greek Church ; which, sunk into servitude and oppression under the Ottoman yoke, and covered with ignorance, hardly lifts its head to observation. Yet, notwithstanding its inferiority, this body refuses to coalesce with Rome, and obstinately repulses all efforts of subjugation : nor has that all-grasping see been more successful with the Nestorians and Monophysites, who steadily maintain their independence, both of Rome, and of Constantinople. In the humiliating circumstances of these Christians, little efforts can be hoped, such as distinguished them formerly in the extension of the Christian pale. Yet it must be noted, that the number of Christians collectively under the Ottoman government is still immense ; and though squeezed and drained by the Turkish Bashaws, as indeed are all the other subjects, yet they are allowed the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religion and Churches. And if you would judge by the proverb, “ as merry as a Greek,” which is said to be their natural disposition to this day, they contrive to bear their burdens without losing their

vivacity. During the late commotions and furious attack of the Russians on the Turkish empire, they found cordial assistance from the Greeks, in the Morea, who would have rejoiced to have seen their religion triumphant. And the same was said of the Cophts in Egypt, that they wished to have welcomed them there ; and had the famous Ali Bey been supported in his rebellion, the consequences to the Ottoman empire might have been more fatal : as it was, after many a disastrous conflict, and parting with vast provinces contiguous to Russia, as the price of peace, Greece and the Isles of the Archipelago, where the Russian fleet rode triumphant, were abandoned ; the poor Greeks returned to the house of their prison, and their dream of halcyon days vanished. From all that can be collected of those whom war or curiosity have led to visit these regions, the state of religion among them is miserably low ; reduced to superstitious forms and observances ; and the papas or priests little better informed than the people.

In Egypt the same ignorance prevails, and the same depression : yet they have still Churches and monasteries preserved inviolate. Their poverty probably is their best protection.

All attempts to carry the Gospel into Abyssinia have failed, as we have mentioned ; and the last embassy planned at Rome proved as ineffectual as all the former. Even the Moravian brethren, those indefatigable servants of the heathen, were unable to effect that design ; and after abortive efforts,

were compelled to return to Grand Cairo : from whence, by leave of the patriarch, they visited the Cophts at Behrusser, and formed a small society, that was very hopeful : but the intestine divisions and conflicts in the year 1783, drove them from the country, and compelled their return to Europe.

One entertaining and adventurous traveller of our own, alone has penetrated the country, and returned to tell the story, as marvellous in many instances, as bearing authentic marks of truth. The motly Christianity still practised among the Abyssinians, will hardly be admitted to deserve that appellation. As to any thing which has the semblance of *spiritual religion*, it seems unknown. Savage in manners, cruel, involved in perpetual contests, they scarcely maintain any profession worth the name of godliness, though abundant in superstition : and their jealousy of strangers is so great, and the danger of visiting them so imminent, that few will be ever tempted to tread in Bruce's steps. His medical skill procured him favor ; and he claims to have accomplished the object of his journey, the discovery of the fountain head of the Nile. Shall an object like that, however, engage such perseverance and zeal ; and shall not the greater objects of the everlasting Gospel awaken some adventurous spirits once more to tempt the dangers of the desert ; and seek to revive the remembrance of Him, who was early known, and obeyed even in Abyssinia ? Surely yet there is hope.

In number of churches, Bruce says, no country can equal them. Every great man cancels his crimes by building one in his life time, or by leaving a sum for that purpose at his death : and every field of battle has an erection by the conqueror to celebrate his victory. The number of ecclesiastics is considerable, as may be supposed, and there are many monasteries, but the buildings are far from magnificent. The Churches are thatched, and round, and the summit a cone. They are supported on wooden pillars, with the roof projecting to form a covered walk. They are full of wretched pictures, but no image, nor any thing embossed, is permitted within : circumcision and many other Jewish rites, are in use among the Abyssinians. The sacrament is administered in both kinds ; and the gospels read through once a year in the service. The superior is called Abuna ; but their ignorance, bigotry, and superstition are equal to any part of the Greek Church, and probably greater. The Romish missionaries have been so rudely treated, and the difficulty of penetrating the country is so great, that they will hardly attempt it again.

### THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

Exhibits an immense body, and the efforts which have been made to extend her bounds through Siberia to the sea of Okotsk and Oonalaska ; and to the opposite coasts of America, have carried the Greek ceremonies to these vastly distant regions, as well as to the Tartars southward, and to the Samoiedes in the north. But this hath been done

by the ambition of a Catharine to extend her dominion, rather than with any missionary zeal to spread the knowledge of Christianity. As yet the state of that country, however increasing in acquisitions of knowledge and civilization, affords no remarkable specimens, of which at least I am informed, of eminent religion. Their worship and ceremonies are full of superstition, and the mere performance of their ritual is all their devotion. The noted intemperance of priests and people speaks a very low state of religious practice. They are hardly yet emerging from barbarism, at a distance from the capitals; and not a little of their ancient paganism mingles with their Christianity.

The *Roskolniki* formerly mentioned, or as they now call themselves the *Starovertzi*, or believers according to the old faith, are a numerous body, especially in Siberia, among the Don Cossacks, and in many of the southern parts of Asia. With them Pugatscheff, who gave such an alarm to Catharine II. took refuge: and their past sufferings from the dominant Church, and rooted aversion to the established hierarchy and ceremonies, led them to be his most zealous partisans. They have bishops and priests among them, who baptise and minister the communion, but as they have suffered so much, and are still persecuted, they are obliged as much as possible to conceal themselves. Of their discipline and principles, I have found no explicit account, though I should augur well of them, if the relation before me is to be depended upon, that the hordes of Cossacks are extremely

bigoted to *pure orthodoxy*. I confess I have some suspicions, this may mean a very different idea from that affixed to it in the History of the Church we have been describing. However, the courage of one of their priests named Toma deserves observation. He went to Moscow, and boldly preached against the invocation of saints. Being threatened by the clergy, his zeal fired him to take an axe, and entering a Church, to hew in pieces the images of St. Alexius and the Virgin. He was seized and condemned, first to have his right hand consumed in the fire, and afterwards to be burnt alive. A sentence which he suffered with the most sedate fortitude, continuing in the flames to testify against the abuses of the dominant church.

In the Greek communion the same bigoted hatred of all who differ from them appears as in the Romish, and the priests would gladly persecute, if the liberality and good sense of the different successive monarchs, and particularly of the last infamous and infidel, though wise and politic woman, had not made it a maxim of government to tolerate all religions; and to invite into their vast, but thinly peopled dominions, persons of all denominations.

This hath eventually opened a door for the entrance of evangelical truth. Several settlements of German Protestants have been established on the Wolga. A Church of Moravian brethren hath been formed at Sarepta, near Astrachan, with a view to a mission among the Calmucks. Finding their

attempts ineffectual, they have directed their attention to their German brethren, who were not very far distant from them, with happier auspices. By their means several evangelical Lutheran ministers have been settled among the colonists, and societies formed of real Christians, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by their exemplary conversation.

A more successful effort hath also been made by these zealous brethren in Livonia, and the adjacent islands in the Baltic, under the Russian government. Societies have there been established, in fellowship with the Moravians, and attended by them, though not separated from the Lutheran communion, but remaining under their own pastors ; and these are said to amount to twenty thousand persons.

I hope more at large to detail in its place the labours and success of these faithful servants of our Saviour throughout the world. Though not joined with them in church order, and differing in some sentiments of religious truth, I feel myself bound, from near forty years acquaintance with many of the brethren, to speak of those whom I have known, as men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and truly devoted to the work and service of our crucified Lord. I am perfectly convinced of the unfaithful reports of a Rimius, excluded from their society for immorality ; as of a Warburton, a Lavington, and the translator of Mo-

sheim, who have adopted the calumnies of so prejudiced an accuser.\*

With peculiarities, perhaps some of them exceptionable, yet admitting no such impure ideas as these men have imputed to them, the more the principles of the brethren are truly known, and the more intimately their lives are scrutinized, the more will they be acknowledged among the few faithful who follow the Lamb of God in the regeneration.

The Russian Church has led me into this digression ; within whose precincts I can find no object on which I am able to dwell with such complacency as on the labours of the Moravian brethren. They seem to afford the only pleasing specimens of that spiritual Christianity which is the subject of these enquiries. From the Greek Church also *the brethren* derive their origin ; though having revived from the lowest state of decay in the bosom of the Lutherans, and most corresponding in religious opinions, with the confession of Augsburg, with them they will most properly be classed, and come under consideration in the next chapter.

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\* I am informed that the impure and malignant note inserted by the translator of Mosheim, against *the brethren*, in his ecclesiastical history, he would from conviction of its injustice, have expunged : but the copy being shown to the author of *the divine legation*, the bishop engaged him to let it stand, and there it remains, a monument of the bitterness, bigotry, and falsehood of these accusers of the brethren.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

**T**HE treaty of Westphalia had placed the Lutheran cause on so solid a basis, as could not easily be shaken. AN. 1648. Peace and security produced a too common effect, declension. Their Church continued in the possession of the same doctrines and established formularies ; it used the same ceremonies, and nominally supported the same discipline ; but awful departures from both, marked how much under the same name the reality of religion may be changed, without its being generally perceived. Offenders against morals were pretty nearly over-looked, and the superior ranks in life raised above submission to any ecclesiastical censure. Nor were the ministers themselves very ready to give the faithful rebuke, much less to denounce the rebellious. Those who defied their pastors, and could defend themselves by wealth, influence and interest, had nothing to apprehend ; and as Mosheim remarked, all ecclesiastical restraint of offenders lost its power, and they triumphed in impunity: The doctrine also professed and subscribed as from the beginning, underwent a very considerable change in the minds of the professors ; among whom the progress of philosophy had been great ; and who adopted the

more fashionable, and miscalled *rational divinity*. The *doctrines of free grace, of justification by faith alone, and predestination*, required too much implicit credit, and too little mathematical demonstration, and metaphysical reasoning to suit the wise men of that day. The difference between Luther on the Galatians, and the sermons and expositions of modern Lutherans, pretty nearly resembled those of our own divines, compared with the thirty-nine articles, and the assembly's catechism.

The *Pietists* at Halle, with professor Franck at their head, continued to maintain much of the life of true religion among them, and some, educated there, spread the savour of divine grace through different parts of Germany. They encountered much opposition from their bigoted, pharisaical or philosophical brethren, and were exposed to much obloquy for their rigid maxims, and resolute rejection of all unhallowed conformity to the manners and amusements of a wicked world. But as the century advanced, the fervor of pietism abated, and iniquity abounding, the love of many waxed cold. The general body of the Lutheran Church sunk into a Laodicean state, and all their zeal was expended on maintaining the forms and formula of Lutheranism instead of the spirit of Christianity. Many ranked high as profound scholars, and indefatigable students, and were more distinguished by scientific attainments, than for vigorous efforts to preach and teach Jesus Christ. The infidel philosophy had too generally diffused its fatal miasmata, and infected the mass of literati; the nobles, who looked

down on the vulgar herd ; the professors of law and physic ; and the army, who prided themselves on their rejection of educational prejudices, and thought it a proof of superior attainment, to be wise above what was written.

This spreading contagion received especial activity under the patronage of the famous, or infamous Frederic, *the great*, in infidelity. Other sovereigns were proud to resemble him ; the men of the most atheistical cast became the admired oracles of the age. From this spawn, crawled forth the new sects of Weishaupt and Kant, with their illuminés, avowing their object to extirminate the Christian name and worship ; and terrifying mankind with the monsters bred from this hebridous race of Philosophers and Theosophists.

Robison and Baruel have followed them into their lurking holes, and unveiled some of their mysteries and anarchical designs to cover the earth with revolutions and bloodshed : not that I think so much of the mischief done, is to be imputed to them, as these suppose. Allowing them all possible malignity, their power could not reach the extent these authors have suggested ; nor were many of the persons on whom Baruel pours out his vials of wrath, deserving his censures. Too partial to his jesuit friends, he would avenge their quarrel ; and by endeavouring to prove too much, weakens the force of his own arguments. Montesquieu assuredly ranks on a very different line from Rousseau ; and Necker and Turgot deserve

not to be reckoned among the pests of mankind—but popery is popery still, under all its humiliations.

Yet the Lord had not forsaken the earth, nor left his truth without witnesses. Some preserved the purity of the faith amidst the too general apostacy. In different parts of Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, were found pastors after the great Shepherd's mind, who fed the flock of Christ with the sincere milk of the word. And though, as the century advanced, the light of truth grew more obscure, and the cause of Christ seemed much to decay, of late, symptoms of happy revival have appeared in various parts, and the daring front of barefaced infidelity has roused the dormant zeal of many to lift up the standard of the cross against the floods of impiety.

Among those peculiarly distinguished for their Christian zeal, one choice body of confessors of the evangelical doctrines, has arisen in the bosom of the Lutheran Church ; and, from small beginnings growing into eminence of excellence, claims a particular mention. No name of professing Protestants in our day, has displayed more fervent zeal for the Lamb of God ; and the characteristic principles of Christianity, as connected with his blood-shedding for us, than the MORAVIAN BRETHREN. Under a long series of persecution and oppression, from the bigotry of popery, they had been reduced to the lowest ebb of misery, and the few scattered remnants of that name seemed fast approaching to utter extinction, when, from the dust of death, the

Moravian Church sprang, as the fabled phoenix from her ashes, and acquiring fresh splendor from the flames, went forth to call back their Lutheran brethren to the Augsburg Confession, to the essential doctrines of revelation, and to a life of greater purity than was generally in vogue. They met, as will be the case with all who rise up to witness against a wicked world that its deeds are darkness, many an abuser: and if the charges laid against them were to be implicitly received, they would become objects of horror and aversion, instead of living witnesses for the Christian doctrine. Happily they are now better known, and their enemies are found liars. Mistakes were magnified into crimes, and expressions ill understood, received an interpretation the very reverse of what the brethren intended; nor is it needful to vindicate peculiarities in their discipline, which have given the handle of abuse and ridicule to their maligners. It is sufficient to observe, that in the great fundamentals of Christianity, they have displayed a zeal to promote the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, which hath produced the happiest effects, not only in Europe, but throughout the world. In their lives and conversations, those who have known them best, without having formed any union with them as a Church, will acknowledge that they are not only blameless, and harmless, but eminently exemplary. Let us give therefore honour where honour is due, and never suffer prejudice to misrepresent any denomination of our truly Christian brethren, because they gather not with us.

The state of the Moravian Church in the present century, forms a prominent feature in the happy revival of evangelical religion ; and justly claims a niche in that temple of the living God, which is the object of our present survey.

AN. 1722. Dispersed, distressed, reduced to the lowest ebb, overwhelmed by the persecutions of popery in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, under the bigot Austrians, the Church of the Brethren, in the beginning of the century had nearly disappeared, and their light seemed ready to be put out in Israel : but few men were left, and they of little estimation in this world ; and no where could they find rest or establishment. In this extremity, three or four poor families, under the spiritual superintendence of that venerable man of God, CHRISTIAN DAVID, migrated from Moravia into upper Lusatia, in search of some sequestered corner of the earth, where, hid from popish persecution, they might worship God our Saviour in peace and purity. At the village of Berthelsdorff, belonging to the since well-known COUNT ZINZENDORFF, they met from his steward, Heitz, an hospitable reception. The Count himself was at the court of Dresden ; but, on being informed of the arrival of the emigrants, he gave orders to encourage them ; they were assisted to build cottages for their families, and some uncultivated lands were allotted to them, which their industry soon rendered productive.

The Count himself, with his relation BARON WATTEVILLE, had been educated at the university

of Halle ; and very early imbibed a happy tincture of the Pietism long retained in that seminary. The manners of the refugees were so congenial with his own, as to engage his fostering affection ; this drew others of the same fraternity to join their brethren ; and a new village arose, called Hernhuth, the cradle of the reviving Church of the Moravians, whose increase hath been since so blessed, and for which the heathen especially shall praise Him, who can produce the greatest effects by instruments the most apparently feeble and inadequate.

Under the patronage of Count Zinzendorff, and his worthy pastor, Rothe, the infant colony continued to prosper, and spread its branches through Germany, Denmark, Holland, England, and America. The Count himself, a zealous Lutheran, at first desired they would unite with the established Church at Berthelsdorff : but the brethren preferred adherence to their ancient regimen. Finding himself unable to prevail with them to recede from their own form of ecclesiastical government, he, after much deliberation agreed, that they should observe the Moravian ritual : and though he himself continued in communion with the Lutheran Church to his dying day, he consented, with Baron Watteville, to be appointed to the presidency of their affairs, spiritual and temporal, in conjunction with the elders of the congregation, as their council and associates.

The following sketch of the nature of the Church order among the brethren, is all my limits can admit

SUPREME in all *the unity of the brethren*, is the GENERAL SYNOD: consisting of deputies from all the congregations, with the bishops, and elders, the inspectors of Churches, and certain laymen.

By this synod, the ELDERS' CONFERENCE is chosen, for the direction of all matters, during the intervals of the session of the synod: To this all are subject—bishops, elders, labourers, and every individual in close Church union with the brethren.

The bishops are chosen by lot, out of a number proposed by the conference for the office. They claim no superiority, nor exercise any jurisdiction, but as empowered and directed by the *Elders' Conference*. They have no fixed diocese or district, but remove from place to place, as stationed or sent by the *Conference*.

The peculiar office of bishops is to ordain bishops, elders, and labourers at home, and among the heathen; such as being approved by the Elders' Conference as candidates, are by the lot selected. These also preach, visit the congregations, regulate their affairs, and encourage the labourers, and all the holy brethren.

Deacons and deaconesses visit, attend and care for the sick and poor of each congregation of the different sexes.



They have *aconomies* or *choir houses*, where they live together in community. The single men, and single women, widows, and widowers apart, each under the superintendence of elderly persons of their own class. In these houses, every person who is able, and has not an independent support, labours in their own occupation, and contributes a stipulated sum for their maintenance. They live thus at a less expence and more comfortably, than they could have done separately ; besides the singular advantages of mutual communion, and daily worship.

The children of each sex are educated with peculiar care, by brethren and sisters appointed for that service : their object is to preserve them from the corruption that is in the world, and to prevent as much as possible the knowledge of evil from ever reaching their eyes or ears. Trained up under discipline, from their tenderest years, their subjection to their superiors and elders is singular, and appears particularly striking in their *missions* and *marriages*.

In the former, those who have offered themselves on the service, and are approved as candidates, wait their several calls, referring themselves entirely to the decision of the lot ; and I believe never hesitate when that hath decided the place of their destination.

In *marriage* they may only form a connection with those of their own communion. The brother who marries out of the congregation is immediately

cut off from church fellowship. Sometimes a sister, by express license from the Elders' Conference, is permitted to marry a person of approved piety, in another communion, yet still to join in their Church ordinances as before.

A brother may make his own choice of a partner in the society ; but as all intercourse between the different sexes is carefully avoided, very few opportunities of forming particular attachments are found, and they usually rather refer their choice to the Church, than decide for themselves. And as the lot must be cast to sanction their union, each receives his partner as a divine appointment : and however strange this method may appear to those who consult only their passions or their interest, it is observable, that no where fewer unhappy marriages are found than among the brethren.

This frequent appeal to the lot, seems the peculiar characteristic of the Moravian Church, and has furnished their adversaries with the objection, as if they supposed themselves, and meant to impress the idea upon others, of being under the immediate direction of God in all matters thus determined. I confess, I can see no scripture order or warrant to countenance such appeal, nor any such practice adopted in the Apostles' days, or in the primitive Church. The single instance, Acts i. 26. when the sacred college was to be filled up by one of the two persons chosen by the Church for the office of Apostle, is no precedent, nor sanctions any similar appeal to the lot.

But whilst I advert to the peculiarities of their discipline, I wish ever to keep in view, and hold up to the attention of all other churches, the characteristic Moravian excellence of missionary zeal.

I have before me the pleasing accounts lately published of the happy success of their labours in twenty-six different missions, besides a variety of attempts made in other places, and by providential hindrances defeated.

The Danish Islands of St. Thomas, St. Jan, and St. Croix, have, by their ministry, received the light of the Gospel, and that especially among the most pitiable and oppressed of human beings, the negro slaves—to them their labours have been singularly blessed.

In as abundant a manner also have their efforts been crowned with success in our English Islands, Jamaica, Antigua, Nevis, Barbadoes, and St. Kitt's, where many thousands of our sable-coloured brethren have been called by their preaching and conversation to the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and worship God in spirit and in truth.

The Greenland and Labrador congregations, afford object of wonder, delight, and thankfulness. Even in these inhospitable climes, and amidst those savage manners, the power of changing grace becomes more eminently displayed—How precious is the name of Jesus from the lips of an Esquimaux!

The Arrowack Indians, and the negroes at Surinam and Berbice, have been collected into bodies of faithful people by the brethren's patience and perseverance.

Canada, and the United States of North America, furnish happy evidences of the powerful word of a crucified Jesus, among the wild and yellow wanderers in the forests, and boundless plains of that vast continent.

Even those, esteemed the last of human beings in brutishness and ignorance, the Hottentots, have felt the divine efficacy of the blood of the Lamb that was slain, and owned the crucified man on Calvary, for their God and Saviour ; have been formed into Christian societies, and upwards of seven hundred are said to be now worshipping him with their faithful pastors, at Bavians Cloof, near the Cape of Good Hope, and live under their tuition, and in their happy communion, believing to the saving of their souls.

In all these various regions, no less than an hundred and forty missionaries are now employed, besides the host who have counted not their lives dear unto themselves, and died in the arduous service. These in general support themselves, and the work, by the assiduous labour of their own hands, in their several arts and occupations ; and, like the Apostle Paul, toil night and day, that they may require nothing from the heathen, and have to give to him that needeth.

By the persevering zeal of these men of God, upwards of TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND of the most destitute of mankind, in different regions of the earth, are recovered from the power of Satan unto God, and now walk with him as dear children, adorning the doctrine of Jesus, by a conversation such as becometh godliness ; and thousands departed in the faith, rest in his bosom.

I might mention their efforts to illumine the distant East, the Coast of Coromandel, and the Nicobar Islands, with the light of the sun of righteousness ; their attempts to penetrate into Abyssinia, to carry the Gospel to Persia and Egypt, and to ascend the mountains of Caucasus ; for to all these regions, and many others, hath love for immortal souls, and zeal for the Redeemer's glory, carried these indefatigable missionaries, and often have they earned the meed of highest approbation, where their labours have been least successful. Let their enemies hear and be confounded—these are epistles of commendation written by the spirit of the living God. Many, swayed by prejudice, presume to condemn what they have neither examined with candor, nor truly understood ; let them produce any similar effect by their instrumentality, and then they may be entitled to attention. Till then, let shame stop the mouth of calumny, and such transcendent excellence claim the tribute of admiration, and be held in deserved honour.

How so small a body as the Moravian Church is equal to such exertions, and capable of providing

so many missionaries, and furnishing an expence so necessarily great, is suprising. The whole number of their members in Europe does not, if I am rightly informed, exceed twelve thousand brethren : of which, about three thousand are in Great Britian and Ireland ; and these not in general the most opulent, or high in any mercantile line. But their liberality aboundeth, and it is no less pleasing to remark the support which their missions receive from the cordial affection of Christian brethren in all denominations. The good providence of God continues to raise up for them new helpers, and to furnish annual supplies for the support of so noble an undertaking. Indeed, in such a cause, the mean shibboleth of party should be mentioned no more, and every real Christian delight to help forward this great labour of love.

Their example also should provoke the jealousy of every Christian Church. They have demonstrated the practicability of establishing the everlasting Gospel in regions the most dreary and inhospitable, and among nations the most rude and ferocious. And shall we not kindle into emulation ? catch from them some spark of zeal, and awake to like vigorous exertions ? A thousand openings court our entrance into lands vast, fertile, populous, genial, easy of access, where the inhabitants are mild, friendly, tractable, presenting every hopeful prospect of success, ready to welcome our labours of love ; regarding us as beings of a superior order, and gently upbraiding us for our neglect of them. In how many places are the

difficulties apparently less, and the advantages unspeakably greater, than in those fields which our Moravian brethren have attempted to cultivate, and with such encouraging success? Have we less zeal, less wisdom, less patience, less perseverance than they? Let shame stimulate, if a sense of duty and love to the souls of men does not constrain us. Let us hear at last the dying groans of the distant heathen, crying, Come over and help us.

This revival of religion among the Moravians, hath not failed also to produce as happy effects at home as among the heathen. Many of their Lutheran and Reformed Brethren have greatly profited by their fraternal intercourse, without connecting themselves in their Church order. A spirit of more animated Christianity has been revived, in Germany and its vicinity. They have formed a large association of ministers from the frozen hills of Norway, to the Carpathian mountains, who assemble annually at Hernhutt, in Lusatia; and those who cannot attend, communicate with their brethren by their correspondence. These all endeavour to strengthen each others hands in the work of the Lord, without distinction of Lutheran or Calvinist; to provoke one another to love, and greater devotedness to God our Saviour. They are growing into a host, and though not many in any one country, yet, when collected, form a glorious body of confessors, whose light cannot but shine before men, and whose zealous labours in their several parishes tend to revive true Christianity.

It is one of the happiest features of the present day, and among the tokens for good to the Lutheran Church, that there is still in the midst of it the unextinguished flame of real love to him who died for us and rose again. I doubt not, but these men of God meet with many a rebuff, and harsh censure from their more lukewarm brethren ; but the religion of Jesus requires the stamp of peculiarity ; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow him, will have no characteristic mark of discipleship.

Some other missionary efforts within the Lutheran pale deserve mention. To the honour of the Danish government be it recorded, that they started among the first, and have been successful in this glorious career. Their ministers visited Greenland with the gospel ; and their mission to the coast of Malabar commenced early in this century. AN. 1705. It hath been pursued with unwearied zeal, and God hath crowned their labours with singular tokens of his approbation. The English *Society for propagating the Gospel*, have greatly helped these missionary efforts of Danes and Germans. And oh ! that my own countrymen, with more devotedness offered themselves to the work ! the harvest is truly plenteous ; but the labourers are few. May the great Master thrust forth more labourers into the harvest !

The nations who maintain the Lutheran faith, are the same as from the beginning of the Reformation. Various changes have happened in the



several kingdoms, but none in their religious profession. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holstein, and all the coasts of the Baltic to the Vistula, chiefly continue within this pale. Saxony, with the other states, who first embraced this doctrine, hath stedfastly persevered in the same confession of faith to this day. Though it is not a little singular, that the two great pillars of Lutheranism originally, have both gone back to the Romish Church. AN. 1698. The Elector of Saxony bartered his religion for the crown of Poland, and the Prince of Hesse, not long ago, for other considerations. Yet this made no change in the government of their countries, which, though the head was apostate, preserved their faith inviolate. A power, hardly known in the commencement of the century, has spread from Brandenburg his vast acquisitions on every side; and is become in Germany, nominally, the head of the Protestant cause. In point of religion, it would be superfluous to say any thing of Frederic the Great or his successors; nevertheless, the monarch who extends and supports religious toleration on the broadest basis, whether heathen or philosopher, may be owned as the Church's nursing father. The true Church asks no support, but peace and tolerance.

Thus, departed as the body of the Lutheran Church is from the tenets of their great Reformer, and much as the declensions from the living power of religion are to be lamented, a precious seed is still preserved in the midst of her through all the lands of her communion. The word of God is in

every hand. The formulary of doctrine and worship is sound, and only those to be blamed who depart from the purity of the one, and the spirituality of the other. A happy æra we hope approaches—a great and evident revival of spiritual religion appears in many places, widely dispersed, and maintaining correspondence with each other, to quicken, comfort and encourage each others hands and hearts in the work of the Lord. We rejoice in the prospect, and knowing that Christ is not divided, share their blessings as our own. We wish to be provoked to jealousy by their example, and to see the Lutheran Church a praise in the earth.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON THE REFORMED CHURCH.

**I**F we estimate the extent of the Reformed Church by the vastness of empire, and commercial settlements possessed by those who make profession of that faith, we shall see her spreading forth her arms to both the Indies, and embracing the habitable globe. Before the late unhappy contest with America, peopled chiefly by emigrants from England, Christianity had spread its light and power, not merely through the provinces which border the Atlantic, but had penetrated deep into the interior recesses of that immense region ; and some noble efforts had been made to communicate to the wandering Indians the knowledge of salvation. The vast Island of Newfoundland was colonised for the sake of the fishery ; and the Gospel has been since planted there, with some happy and increasing effect. Even the savage coast of Labrador, through the zeal of the Moravians, has received the light of the truth ; and in the highest northern latitudes, England has established forts and factories, though I have never yet heard of any missionary labours at Hudson's Bay or its dependencies. Canada has added a new field. Though popery is still the dominant religion, the government is Protestant, and an open door set for the Gospel there to enter. Of the state of religion in all this vast northern

continent, I shall speak hereafter, observing only, that amidst many declensions and revivals, much of the power of godliness yet remains ; and some vigorous efforts have been made of late, through the zeal of different bodies, to rouse up a deeper sense of divine things in the minds of that vast nation, not yet well consolidated, though it is hoped, daily settling on a firmer basis. With toleration of all denominations, *the reformed religion* is that generally professed in North America, whether by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Independents, and many others, of the various sects which every where people that immense republic.

In the East, the extensive settlements and conquests of English and Dutch, have greatly reduced the Portuguese and popery ; many vestiges of which remain in the Carnatic, and on the Coast of Malabar. Yet it must be lamented, that so little efforts have been made by either of these powers, proportionate to their ability, and the greatness of their empire, to spread the knowledge of salvation through the countries of their obedience. What might not Holland have done from Batavia, and her immense extent of insular dominion ? What from Ceylon ? What from the Cape of Good Hope ? What from innumerable other parts where Batavian arms have triumphed, and their conquests spread ? Every where, indeed, in their capital cities and settlements, they have established their religion, and sent ministers to officiate ; but I have not yet heard of any attempts to evangelize the natives, nor of a single missionary among an hun-

dred thousand Chinese settled at Batavia. Commerce and gain seem to have engrossed their attention. Indeed, I am sorry to record, that they have rather frowned on missions, and instead of forwarding the labours of the good Moravians, both at the Cape and in America, have obstructed the work, and eyed with jealousy and aversion, the noble and disinterested labourers, who, for the sake of the poor heathen, have been willing to spend and be spent. They, as many others, are afraid, lest the knowledge of the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, should loosen the yoke of tyranny and oppression, under which in general through the East the natives are held ; at least this is generally made the pretext for opposition. Though nothing can be clearer, than that natives of our own religion, and attached to us by these most powerful bonds, must prove our best friends and auxiliaries : but bigotry is as blind, as commerce is jealous and rapacious.

The English extent of foreign empire is still more vast, and of late increasing to a magnitude rather terrifying. Bengal alone, with the settlements in the Carnatic, is said to comprise thirty millions of inhabitants ; and in every province, town and purgannah, our power is absolute ; and none to hinder any efforts of missionary labour. But throughout this empire, not only no vigorous efforts to make the Gospel known have ever been attempted by the India Company, in whom the sovereignty is vested ; but contrarywise, the attempts of others have in great measure been frown-

ed upon, and every application of those whose zeal prompted them to the service, been rejected ; though they merely requested permission to go, and only asked the common protection of government to all peaceable subjects.

It is well known that in Bengal, and all the vast provinces to the north ; in every thing which regards Christianity, the natives have been hitherto utterly neglected. Even the very few clergymen who have visited the capitals of our settlements in India, have been generally too infected with the epidemic rage of the country, to amass wealth, in order to return with it to Europe, an object utterly inconsistent with every thing divine, holy and heavenly.

Two or three zealous Baptist ministers, affected with the deplorable state of the poor Hindoos, have lately passed unnoticed into the interior of the country, with a view of communicating to them the Gospel of Christ. They are employed in an Indigo manufactory ; and improve the Lord's-day and their intervals of leisure, in conversing and discoursing with the natives, Mahometans, Brahmins and others, on the subject of Christianity : a considerable attention is paid to their ministry, and though no open converts have submitted to baptism, they report commencements sufficiently auspicious, to encourage perseverance and hope of happy success ; but what especially must render their labours highly respectable in the sight of Christians of all denominations, is their indefati-

gable industry with the help of some Bramins and Pundits, to translate the Bible into the Bengalese tongue ; and which is now about to be published in Bengal, and to be disseminated among the natives. God speed the glorious attempt ! His word can never be read in vain.

In the *Carnatic* some light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, hath been long diffused by the zealous efforts of the Danish missionaries from Tranquebar ; and a few faithful foreign Lutheran ministers, continue to labour with some success in the vicinity of Madras ; and in the Tanjore country, supported chiefly by the Society for propogating the Gospel in England. At the head of these is that aged and venerable servant of Christ, Mr. Swartz, \* near forty years ago, I think, my friend and companion at Oxford ; Mr. Gerické, Mr. Janiké, and one or two more, exhausted with labour, advanced in age, and going down to the grave, with little prospect of successors animated by the same spirit. They are incessant in soliciting fresh and more numerous assistants, but few hear their call, or fly to share the toils of missionary service. God seems to have given their preaching such success among the natives, as to render it no longer doubtful, that however strong the barrier, which the Bramanic casts and national manners, and especially the sanctioned immoralities of the Gentoos, may have erected against the Gospel of Christ, no obstacle is insurmountable to zeal and perseverance. If God will work, then none can let it. They must indeed be

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\* This blessed labourer, I hear, has just entered into his rest.

fearfully inexcusable who enter not in themselves, and those who were willing to enter, and devote their lives and substance to the service they hinder. Where a thousand missionaries would find more employment than their most zealous labours could fulfil, four or five aged Germans now fan the dying embers, and scarcely keep the expiring flame alive.

The good Moravians, as I am informed, after abortive efforts to spread the Gospel in the Nicobar Islands, and having no such prospects as encourage their stay in the Carnatic, are removing their labourers to Europe, to be employed in more promising fields of usefulness among the heathen.

In what remains of our western empire, especially the Leeward Islands, the black inhabitants, by which they are chiefly occupied, have lately engaged the attention of some faithful servants of Christ ; and been considerably evangelized, not by the countenance of government, or the ministry established in the Church, which is in a state of fearful neglect, but by the voluntary zeal of Moravians, and the Westleyan Methodists. These have nobly devoted themselves to the service of their poor black enslaved brethren, whom no man cared for ; and have succeeded in the call and conversion of many thousands to the faith and love of Jesus Christ. In this honourable service none have more distinguished their philanthropy and fidelity, than the Rev. Dr. Coke, a principal minister among the Methodists.



A new world hath lately been discovered, and explored by British navigators. To one region of which we have already sent our unhappy convicts, and with them the everlasting Gospel ; for so hath God in his gracious providence ordained, that the first testimony borne in that land of darkness and the shadow of death, should be by those faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Marsden. May their labours kindle a flame never to be extinguished ! and many of their brethren offer themselves on this self-denying service !

A nobler attempt to evangelize the islands in the vast Pacific Ocean, hath recently been made by a society formed by ministers and others of all denominations, who agreeing to merge their several peculiarities in the one sacred name of CHRISTIAN, have united without preference of churches or party, to send forth faithful men to preach and teach Jesus Christ among the heathen, and to know nothing but him crucified. By the liberal contributions of individuals, who have formed the *Missionary Society*, a sum of twelve or thirteen thousand pounds was expended in the purchase of a large vessel of three hundred tons, conveying thirty missionaries, with five sisters, wives to the brethren, and two little children ; furnished with every thing needful for one or more settlements ; and to secure them a favourable reception among the natives. The vessel was navigated by men of God, who had many of them embarked for love of the cause ; and commanded by that able and singularly excellent man, Capt. Wilson, who had

devoted his life and labours to the service freely ; renouncing all reward, but that inestimable one, the conducting so glorious an undertaking. Their first object was to visit Otaheite, and the Society Islands, as most frequented and best known, and if an opening appeared, to leave there our married brethren, and the larger part of the younger labourers ; to proceed to Tongataboo, and the Friendly Islands, and deposit a few brethren ; to return to the Marquesas, and if there was a prospect of welcome and success, to make a beginning with two or three of our younger brethren : returning by Otaheite and Tongataboo, to see how our missionaries fared, and to ascertain their safety and hospitable reception among the heathen ; proceeding thence to China, for a cargo of tea, in order to cover by the freight, some portion of the expence necessarily incurred, by so long and circuitous a navigation.

The eminent success with which this attempt has been attended, is before the public at large in the first Missionary Voyage, than which probably there never was another so singularly favourable. After a course of so many thousand miles, the whole body of missionaries were landed in the places of their several destination, at Otaheite, at Tongataboo, and the Marquesas, in perfect health ; and the ship returned by Canton, with a cargo of tea into the port of London, in about one and twenty months, and brought back every seaman in as good health as she had received them. Not an individual was lost on the passage, no disease

ever visited the crew, nor was the least want of any comfort felt during the whole of the voyage. The name of Capt. Wilson, under whose conduct and care the service was accomplished, will descend with honour and remembrance to the latest posterity.

Encouraged by so promising a beginning, a second equipment was immediately begun, to strengthen the hands of those already settled, and to enlarge the work in other Islands. Thirty-nine brethren and sisters, with seven children, cheerfully entered on the service. But it hath pleased God in his mysterious providence, to disappoint our expectations, and to exercise our faith and patience. They were captured by a French privateer, as they were entering the harbour of Rio Janiero, and landed at Monte Video, in the Rio Plata. From the French and Spaniards they received the kindest treatment ; and after unavailing efforts to re-purchase their vessel and proceed, they were permitted to embark for Rio Janiero, and passing from thence to Lisbon, are, with the exception of three or four detained through indisposition, arrived once more among their friends and brethren in safety.

Whatever the final event may be of these endeavours to evangelize the heathen world, whether the great Head of the Church be pleased to crown our labours with success, or in his all-righteous dispensations to frustrate our hopes, the attempt is Christian, is glorious. It is now demonstrated that a mission to these distant and desirable lands

is practicable, is easy, and the means within the power of individuals, if zeal for Christ, and love for the souls of men be not wanting. And surely no unforeseen difficulties with which we may have to struggle, or partial disappointments, should discourage us from persevering in so great a design, but rather rouse the missionary brethren to renewed and more vigorous exertions.

Advices also from Port Jackson at first produced more distress than even the capture of the *Duff* itself; till on the arrival of dispatches from the missionaries themselves, it was found that though some of them, alarmed with apprehensions for their wives, after they had lived a whole year without any insult or injury, had taken the opportunity of the departure of the *Nautilus*, which had touched at Otaheite, to remove to Port Jackson; seven brethren and one woman refused to quit their station; and we hope are happily labouring to advance the great object of their mission. Nor are those who have departed without some prospect of being made more useful in the place, whither they have migrated, than if they had rested where they were placed. God's providential disposals are all-wise, and his work will often be more effectually accomplished, by the steps which we regarded as injurious, and tending to the disappointment of the object we had in view. Perfectly sure the mission is of God, and under his peculiar care, we rest in his disposal as ordering all things well; and patiently wait, and quietly hope to see the completed salvation of our God. It is hoped that soon

these faithful and devoted servants of the heathen will be visited and strengthened by men of a like mind, and the seed of eternal life take deeper root, and spread through all the Isles of the Pacific Ocean.

These trials of faith abate nothing of our prospects of success, which were never more promising, and more loudly call upon us for active and speedy efforts to repair every loss, and increase our sphere of action. Nothing has happened in the smallest manner to lessen the desirableness of this labour of love, or the facility of its execution. We have given our brethren in the Islands our solemn pledge that we will visit them : their claims upon us are stronger than ever, and as the ability of the Society increases in all its resources, no doubt this will be among their first objects.

But they have not confined their views to one region of the heathen world, however great and promising. They have wished to embrace the habitable globe as far as their means shall be found adequate to their desires. Africa, the seat of servitude, the region of darkness, and the most unexplored of all the continents, has especially attracted the attentions of the Society. Their first efforts were directed through the colony of Sierra Leone, to penetrate into the Fowlah country, and communicate the blessings of the Gospel to the interior, through the medium of the surrounding nations. Efforts to this purpose had been made before by the Westleyan Methodists and the Baptists, and failed rather from the insufficiency of the instru-

ments, than the impracticability of the attempt. Undismayed by these unsuccessful attempts, the London Missionary Society, in conjunction with similar Societies at Glasgow and Edinburgh, determined to send out six single brethren, two from each body, to make a renewed effort to introduce the Gospel there. The climate however has been found so unfavourable that this effort also has been, in consequence of death and indisposition, rendered abortive, and only two of the six missionaries remain labouring with acceptance in the colony, without any prospect of passing into the interior country.

A happier issue we trust will attend our mission to the Cape of Good Hope and the country of the Caffres and Boshemen, which besides the advantage of a more genial climate, has commenced with more auspicious prospects ; and for which the Lord seemed to have provided especially suitable instruments in Dr. Vanderkemp and his associates.

Dr. Vanderkemp was a Hollander, a man of talents, and improved understanding, about fifty. He had been bred a physician ; had studied a considerable time at Edinburgh, as well as in his native universities ; he spoke the English, French and Latin languages ; but as is too common with the faculty, he had long embraced the fashionable philosophy, and held the tenets of deism. A singular affliction in his family occasioned by the sudden death of his wife and child, attended by some very particular impressions of God's spirit, engaged him more deeply and seriously to consider his ways,

and review the foundations of his hope, than he had ever yet done. This led him to a careful re-perusal of the word of God and the happy effect was a solid conviction of revealed truth, and real conversion of his heart to God our Saviour.

He resolved from henceforth to devote himself wholly to Christ, and to the service of men's souls, and his heart was particularly led out to desire to communicate the knowledge of salvation, to the poor heathen whom none had cared for. He was for some time in this state of mind without a determined object, till he read of the rise and progress of the London Missionary Society. He immediately communicated to them the desire of his soul to devote himself to the heathen. After proper enquiries into his character and abilities, his offer was embraced with great delight, and he was invited to England, where the interview issued in the most cordial welcome of his services. His native language fitting him peculiarly for the Cape of Good Hope and its vicinity, that was fixed as the place of his destination.

On his return to Holland to settle his affairs, in order to embark in the missionary service, he took with him and circulated in Dutch, an address from the London Missionary Society to the faithful in his own country. This immediately produced the happiest effects. A Society, during his stay, was formed at Rotterdam, on the same plan with our own. A correspondence opened, and our design was not only highly approved, but immediately seconded by the offer of a Dutch minister to ac-

company Dr. Vanderkemp, whose name was Kicherer ; to these, two of our own brethren were joined, and they embarked in one of our convict ships, the Hillsborough, to be conveyed to their appointed station.

The diligence, zeal, and intrepidity of our brethren among the convicts, amidst the ravages of death and the jail fever, and the blessed effects of their labours on the living and dying, are before the public. They prove the power of the Gospel on the most obdurate of mankind. We have just received the pleasing intelligence that on a visit to these miserable beings, after our brethren had been some time at the Cape, they found the spirit of prayer and seriousness still increasing among them ; and in the midst of all their misery, they united to cry unto God for mercy. Our missionary brethren at Port Jackson, will be very providentially placed to cultivate every gracious impression which may remain on their minds at their arrival.

The blessing of the Lord on the labours of these missionaries at the Cape hath been as singular. They have appropriated four evenings in a week to the instruction of the slaves, who attend them in great numbers, and respecting whom Dr. Vanderkemp expresses himself in the strongest terms of confidence, that they have been baptised with the Holy Ghost, though the regulations established, it seems, at the Cape, forbid them to be admitted to the Christian rite of baptism, an obstruction which assuredly our humane and Christian government will not fail, on application, to remove.



But the most pleasing trait attending this mission is the earnest application from the most savage of all the tribes, *the Boshemen*, to obtain one of our brethren to teach them the knowledge of the true God. Whilst they were deliberating on the subject, and had determined to decline the service, as likely to interfere with the Caffre mission, for which preparations had been made ; three of the Boshemen chiefs themselves came to the Cape, and cleaving to our brethren, would not leave them, till one of them had promised to accompany them to the Boshemen nation, whither he has proceeded, we hope, with a companion from the Cape, or one of our Dutch brethren.

A Missionary Society instituted at the Cape, under the title of the South African Missionary Society, is the first fruits of our brethrens' exertions, and of the address sent from the Missionary Society to the inhabitants at the Cape. Their commencement is most auspicious, and the subscription considerable, one lady having given fifteen thousand florins. It manifests that God's spirit is moving on the hearts of men, throughout the whole Christian world, and that the long dormant spirit of zeal begins to be awakened to vigorous exertions, for the Redeemer's glory, and the salvation of the souls of men.

All the preparations were ready for the journey of the missionaries to the Caffres and the Boshemen, when the last dispatch was sent : the government most kindly favouring, and the farmers waiting

with teams and oxen to convey the brethren to the places of their destination. May this small beginning, through the divine benediction, be followed with great increase! Never in our time did Africa seem to open a more promising door of entrance to the heathen. The missionary publications on this subject will be read with thankfulness and delight.

We wished to visit our vast possessions in the East, and to carry the light of the Gospel to the Mahomedan and Bramanic sects; but obstacles in our way, before noted, prevented our intentions. One man alone has been employed to gain information of the true state of things on the spot, and to instruct us whether there, or in any of the adjoining nations, such prospects open, as would encourage attempts to evangelize that region of the world. We have heard of his safe arrival.

One solitary labourer also has been dispatched to the little Island of Twilingate, near Newfoundland, at the earnest request of the inhabitants, from whom we have received tidings of his welcome and commencement of labours.

These are the actual efforts which have been made, and still greater are in the intention of the Society, for which adequate preparations are making. The Sandwich Islands, the Marquesas, and the Society Islands, were to have received a new body of missionaries without delay. The afflictive circumstances which have happened, may for a while retard the purposes of the Society: but they

continue vigorously active to repair the breach, and provide both persons and provision for the accomplishment of their original design. The heirs of glory are usually trained up in the school of adversity, and to those who have read the Acts of the Apostles, a series of sufferings and disappointments have been seen to issue in the final success of the Gospel ; fully persuaded that it is the Lord's work, we look up and go forward. Duty is ours—events are His.

It is a pleasing trait to remark, how cordial an interest the faithful brethren in all lands have taken in these feeble efforts of missionary labour ! and how liberally some Societies and individuals have transmitted their gifts to our treasury. Correspondents from Sweden, Berlin, Basil, Zurich, Rotterdam, Franckfort, East Friesland, Lusatia, New-York, Connecticut, and other places, have conveyed to us their warmest and most affectionate wishes for our success ; united with us in our stated seasons of prayer ; and in several places formed associations to promote the same objects, and to provide the means for running the same race of missionary zeal. May He who hath the residue of the spirit, pour it forth more abundantly upon us all !

Our trans-Atlantic brethren profess to turn their attention particularly to the Indian nations, in the interior of that vast continent ; and, indeed, a wide field opens from the Allegany mountains to the shores of the North Western Coast, which will require their most vigorous efforts. Could we some day

so far proceed as to ascend the Columbia river, and form a mission on its banks, it is not out of hope, that the sound should reach the interior, and spread till the undulations on either side meet, and form one concert of praise. Is any thing impossible with God ?

But whatever retardments may make the heart sick with hope deferred, or whatever difficulties obstruct the execution of the present efforts, in this or some succeeding generation, the work shall be done with efficacy : for the heathen are given to the Saviour for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. Happy and honoured are those, whom he shall deign to employ as instruments in the accomplishment of his glorious designs !

I have collected the chief traits of the latest missionary labours thus summarily together, and highly thankful should I feel, if I shall be able to record the progress of a work so happily begun. No circumstance of the present day bears a more auspicious aspect on the erection and increase of the Church of the living God. Indeed, in this eventful period, it is not a little reviving, amidst all the prevailing desolations and ungodliness around, to see the morning thus spread upon the mountains, and to hope for the rising glories of the sun of righteousness, to renew the face of the earth. The Church of the reformed will, I believe, be the divine and favoured instrument in this service, when God the Spirit shall revive his work in the midst of the years ; and I look especially to my

native land for this service, persuaded that we are yet preserved to be the heralds of the everlasting Gospel unto the ends of the earth.

But I return from the other quarters of the globe to Europe, and the nations of the reformed religion there.

### GREAT BRITAIN.

AMONG the chief of the nations, stands this long and greatly favored Isle, where, since the gospel was first preached among us, scarcely ever has there been a time, when it more ran and was glorified, than at the present. It is the joy of every faithful heart to look around, and amidst every dark and dreary prospect, to behold a mighty spirit stirred up, to make the name of Immanuel known and glorified in the earth.

It must be acknowledged and deplored, for a great part of this century, that the same declensions from the purity of the faith, and the power of spiritual religion, had marked the Reformed, as well as the Lutheran Church ; and our own shared deeply in the general decay. Literature, indeed, never advanced to a higher summit. The commencement of this century has been called the *Augustan age*, when purity of stile added the most perfect polish to deep erudition, as well as the *belles lettres*. A Newton, an Addison, need only be mentioned, out of a thousand others, whose works will be admired to the latest posterity ; and afford the noblest specimens in the English lan-

guage: I would conceal, if I could, names of a later date, a Hume, a Gibbon, because, with all their admitted attainments and excellence, their writings contain the concentrated virus of infidelity, couched under the most able faculties and most engaging style. They are the enemies of my God, but his cross will prevail. This age has been singularly philosophic; big with discoveries in all the hidden recesses of nature; and as pregnant of every abomination. The pride of wisdom, and the rage of reasoning, have summoned revelation to their unhallowed bar, and condemned it. Insensibility to God, and carelessness about a judgment to come, no longer believed or feared, have opened the flood-gates to ungodliness. Infidelity and scepticism, respecting an eternal world, have given importance to the present; and multitudes appear in haste to seize their portion, and to enjoy the gratifications of the beast, while they live, expecting, as the beast, to die. Hence dissipation of every kind has burst in as a flood; and though I know not that our morals are more openly vicious than formerly, the general departure from all religious principle is glaringly evident; in the universal neglect of all divine ordinances, hardly the decencies of religion or worship continue to be maintained.

In the commencement of this century, the Church was chiefly governed, and filled by the latitudinarian divines; whose moral writings, however able and ingenious, rendered the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel unfashionable: and as they had themselves drank deep into the Arminian

tenets, I wonder not to hear the great Archbishop Tillotson declare of the Athanasian creed that "he wished we were well rid of it." Such indeed was the general idea of the age, that it contained articles too trinitarian, too evangelical and too uncharitable, according to their apprehensions of divine truth. Hence, though all our subscriptions were strongly Calvinistic, and, as Bishop Burnet owns, this is the true and natural sense of the Church and its articles, yet they came to be called *articles of peace*—were to be interpreted with a considerable *latitude*—and, in short admitted, in whatever sense men chose to receive them : a supposition so disingenuous, that, though countenanced by general concurrence, it can never alter the nature of the thing, or make it less false and hypocritical, however numerous the body of the heterodox and Arminian clergy, and however few the reformed, or Calvinistic. Nothing, indeed, can be farther from truth, than the representation made by Mosheim, that the *Reformed Church* in general, and the *Church of England* in particular, "receives into its bosom" "Arminians and Calvinists, Supralapsarians, Sublapsarians, and Universalists, without adhering strictly to creeds and confessions." The very reverse is the case ; the same original creeds and confessions remain unchanged ; nor is it in the power of the Church, or its ministers, to make the least alteration, without an act of Parliament. They must be subscribed *ex animo*, and taken in no other sense *expressly*, than the *literal* and *grammatical*, according to the first institution ; and whoever acts otherwise, betrays the rights of con-

science to convenience. That this is frequently, nay, generally done, makes no alteration in the claims of the Church, and only adds to the criminality, by the example of general depravity.

The concealment and neglect of the distinguishing peculiarities of Christianity, as if their defenders themselves were afraid to produce them, gave especial boldness to the infidels; and as the tolerating genius of the times admitted an uncontrouled liberty of the press, it swarmed with publications of the most pernicious tendency, most congenial with the general corruption of manners, and at the same time most highly conducive to spread the prevailing impiety and profligacy. England, though not singular, ranks among the first in these productions. A Collins, a Tindal, a Morgan, and a Chubb, with the still farther advanced in atheism, a Mandeville, a Toland, and a Woollaston, improved upon the noble authors of the former age, and opened the doors of the temple of infidelity wider; as indeed was needful, to admit the crowd that sought to take shelter there, from the threatenings of revealed truth, and the uneasiness of a guilty conscience.

Through the moralists in the pulpit, and the deists in the press, Christianity was reduced to a very emaciated figure. Even the dissenters, who affected greater purity of religion, had drank deep into the general apostacy, and sunk into a worldly, careless spirit. The Presbyterians, especially, diverged into the errors of Arianism; and as their ministers lost the life of religion in their own souls,



their congregations dwindled, and easily entered the vortex of conformity, and got rid of inabilities for the magistracy, and a sort of reproach that repelled them from the circles of fashion. The Independents were few, and little attended to; though amongst them the sounder doctrines were maintained, but in general too cold, and dead-hearted; and the Baptists hardly had a name. The Quakers, left to their silent meetings, were declining and forgotten; and the other sects sunk into insignificance.

The old distinction between High and Low Church was not yet abolished, though the latitudinarian doctrines, and the new bishops, who had the great weight in the scale, were far predominant; embraced all protestants as their brethren; admitted true Churches might subsist without episcopacy; and therefore more cordially received the dissenters, and formed very kind friendships and correspondencies with the ingenious of every denomination. But there were bigots who regarded their brethren with abhorrence; supposed they had neither ministry, nor sacraments, and belonged to no Church; schismatics, and in mortal error. These particularly revived at the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, when the cry, that the Church was in danger, was made a handle to bring in a tory ministry; and that contemptible creature, Sacheverel, became of importance. AN. 1710. The Queen, more partial to her popish brother, than to the distant Hanover family, and rather

wishing the throne to descend to her own blood, encouraged the high Church party, as always most friendly to Popery ; and had her life been prolonged, and the intrigues of the tory ministry successful, another Popish King would have been introduced on the nation, and welcomed by the high Church and non-jurors, always partial and attached to the exiled family, and necessarily so from their principles of indefeasible right and non-resistance—a gracious Providence once more rescued the land from these traiterous designs. The infidel Bolingbroke, conscious of his correspondences, fled ; and the famous Bishop Atterbury was impeached for his detected intrigues with James, the abdicated exile.

AN. 1714. With the House of Brunswick the liberty of the country stood confirmed ; and all who dissented from the Church, satisfied with a liberal toleration, approved themselves faithful friends to the new dynasty : for the distance of relation to the throne, made it an act of election, rather than hereditary succession : a kind of parliamentary grant to that House, as Protestants, and nearest in blood ; and as affording the happiest prospects of maintaining the liberties of the country. With this, all the high Church party were greatly dissatisfied, and employed their utmost power and art to foment repeated rebellions against the House of Brunswick ; but happily their machinations were defeated, and their rebellions quashed, with the punishment due to those who were found engaged in them. As the dissenters

approved themselves strong friends to government, they enjoyed favour ; and being excluded from all lucrative preferment in the Church, the prime minister wished to reward them for their loyalty ; and by a retaining fee, preserve them stedfast. A considerable sum therefore was annually lodged with the heads of the great divisions, the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists, called *regium donum*, the royal bounty, to be distributed among the more necessitous ministers of their several congregations, (AN. 1738) according to the discretion of a number of principal ministers of these denominations, with whom this gift was entrusted, and by whom it is annually divided.

The rising prosperity of the nation, with increasing wealth and commerce, as these things usually do, tended to increase the corruption of the kingdom. And morals, though strongly inculcated, woefully decayed. A word, called *patriotism*, was supposed to contain all excellence, and therefore more affected than any thing beside ; though, in fact, a greater solecism cannot be imagined, than an immoral patriot. Between contests for power, thirst for riches, and inordinate love of pleasure, the nation sunk down into corruption, and the Church erected a feeble barrier against the fashionable pursuits. All its great preferments were bestowed to secure friends to administration : whatever prime minister prevailed, the prelatical bench looked up to their creator with devotion and assiduous attention. The life and power of godliness fell to a very low standard ; and only here and

there an individual cleaved to the faith once delivered to the saints, and dared to be singular.

**AN 1729.** It was in this state of torpor and departure from truth and godliness, that at Oxford, one of our universities, a few, chiefly young men, began to feel the deplorable spiritual ignorance and corruption around them. They were conscious something ought to be done to revive a sense of religion in principle and practice, from the decay into which it was fallen : they were convinced men of God and ministers of the sanctuary, ought to lead very different lives from any thing they observed at college.

John and Charles Wesley, the first, and most distinguished leaders in this revival of evangelical truth, were brothers : the one fellow of Lincoln College, the other student of Christ Church. Their father, a respectable Clergyman at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, was of the high Church party, and had educated his sons in his own principles. John, the eldest, took the lead, and at the first appeared vastly disposed to inculcate every rigorous mortification, far beyond the practices of that day, and sometimes approaching the penances of popery.

With these, associated a number of other students, whose minds were similarly affected. Mr. Ingham, Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Harvey, were afterwards particularly distinguished. They all entered into solemn engagements with each other, to lead a stricter life of holiness and self-denial than they

had ever yet done, and to separate from every thing unbecoming their character as Christians or ministers. They agreed to meet frequently together at each other's rooms for prayer and reading the Scripture ; to keep stated times of fasting, and to receive the communion every Lord's day ; they visited the prisons and the sick ; they sought out and relieved distressed objects ; and by these and other particularities, attended by an uncommonly sanctimonious deportment, they rendered themselves very notorious in the University, and acquired the name of **METHODISTS**.

As they all set out with profession of strict adherence to the Church of England, the distinguishing tenets of her articles and homilies were particularly enforced by them : and as this was utterly unlike the manner of preaching, which then chiefly obtained, they attracted very numerous audiences ; and their lively manner of address, as well as the matter of their discourses, exceedingly struck the hearers with their novelty, as well as importance. They became still more popular, after their return from Georgia, whither zeal for the Gospel had carried them. And nothing awakened greater attention to their preaching, than their quitting the universal habit of reading their sermons from a book, without any animation, and addressing extempore discourses to the congregations where they ministered.

The multitudes which followed them were much affected—a great and visible change was produced

in the minds of many. The attention paid to these ministers, and the blessing evident on their labours, roused them to increasing vigorous exertions. They were always at their work, preaching wherever they could procure admittance into the Churches; and not a little flattered by the popularity attending their ministrations. They must have been more than men, if they had not been so. Some wild-fire could hardly fail to mingle with the sacred flame—whilst the noise they raised by their preaching was inconceivable.

At first they appeared united in sentiment; but they had not long laboured, before it was evident they differed in the points which had occasioned so much dispute. Mr. Wesley, the father of Methodism, with his brother, and those of his opinion, leaned to the Arminian doctrine—strong against irrespective decrees, but firmly maintaining *the fall and its consequences, the necessity of justification by faith alone, and the operation of the Holy Ghost*, to produce all righteousness and true holiness: but they taught withal the *universality* of Christ's redemption; and the offering of his body, *alike* for those who are lost, as for those who are saved: and in point of *free-will*, they supposed, though still as a gift of grace, that every man had *some* powers of will within the sphere of his own exertion, which first led to conversion—that the benefits of Christ's redemption extended to those who had never heard of his name—that by improving the measure of light and grace within him, every man might be saved—but that no man could be sure of *persevering*

in grace : and, that in possibility, notwithstanding what Christ hath done and suffered, *all* might reject the remedy provided, and perish eternally.

Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Harvey, and those who united with them in sentiment, held the articles of the Church in the sense usually termed Calvinistic ; and which an ingenuous enquirer can hardly hesitate to confess was the sense of the compilers. Though in age Mr. Whitfield was younger than the Wesleys, in zeal and labours he had no superior ; his amazing exertions are well known ; and the effects of them were prodigious through the whole land. He confined not his ministry to England—Scotland enjoyed the benefit of his visits, and furnished innumerable evidences of the power with which he spake : nor were his efforts restricted to Britain, but extended to America ; whither the Mr. Wesleys had first led the way. I mean not to enter on a life so well drawn up by Dr. Gillies. Suffice it to observe, that by the labours of these indefatigable men, a flood of Gospel light broke upon the nation. At first they were wholly confined to the Church of England, as their attachment to it by education was strong : and had they been fixed in any settled station, they had not improbably lived and died, good men, useful men, but unnoticed and unknown—a series of providences had designed them for greater and more extensive usefulness. The Churches growing unable to contain the crowds which flocked after them, Mr. Whitfield first, at Bristol, A.D. 1739, resolved to visit and preach to the wild colliers in the wood,

who had seldom attended any worship : and his signal success among *them*, encouraged his persevering efforts. On his return to London, he used the same means of field-preaching, at Kennington Common, and Moorfields, being now generally excluded from the Churches to which he had himself somewhat contributed, by perhaps too severe animadversions on the clergy, as well as the envy and disgust that his singular popularity had occasioned.

Nor were Mr. John Wesley and his brother Charles, less zealously employed, but also took the field, and preached every where. The congregations under the canopy of heaven were prodigious : sometimes, indeed, riotous and insulting, but in general solemn and attentive. By these labours multitudes were daily added to the Church of such as should be saved.

Hitherto the principal leaders, though acting independent of each other, had maintained apparent fellowship ; but the difference of their sentiments respecting the doctrines of predestination and grace, began to awaken unpleasant disputes, which were carried on sometimes with too much asperity. Yet *the corruption of human nature, justification by faith alone, and the necessity of a divine change of heart*, by the power of the Holy Ghost ; these fundamental truths, both professed zealously to hold and teach ; nor did the division which followed between them, retard the progress of the work. They parted, indeed, like Paul and Barnabas ; but the extent of the sphere of their use-



fulness was thereby enlarged. Unable to supply the numberless places and congregations collected by their labours with a regularly ordained ministry, they each associated with themselves lay preachers, the best informed and qualified, whom they could find ; and thus multiplied themselves over the face of the whole land. Their Societies increased by thousands, and their ministry was blessed to the great revival of religion wherever they itinerated.

This immense body of Methodists, from the difference of the doctrines each maintained respecting the decrees of God, and free-will, necessarily divided into two separate communions, the *Calvinistic* and *Arminian* ; both of them professed predilection to the Church, and did not at all object to Episcopal government as a Church order ; but necessitated, from the situation in which they were placed, to preserve the congregations which they had collected and formed into religious Societies, the great leaders, Wesley and Whitfield, appointed for their spiritual edification, local and itinerant preachers, to confirm their faith, and increase their numbers : themselves continuing the apostolic plan of itinerancy, and visiting in rotation the Churches which their ministry had raised. Men more laborious than those principal persons were, since the Apostles' days will hardly be found. They repeatedly travelled over a space more than the circumference of the globe ; wherever they moved, they were as a flame of fire, and left a train of evangelical light behind them. They were in preaching unwearied, two, three, and sometimes

four times a-day ; and this often in places many miles distant from each other ; and notice having been previously given of their coming, thousands awaited and welcomed them, heard them with reverence, and received them as angels of God. Thus immense congregations were formed through all parts of the kingdom, especially in the great manufacturing towns, among the tin-mines, and the collieries. The aggregate amount of auditors must have been several hundred thousand, as the preachers themselves, in Mr. Wesley's connection alone, in Europe and America, amounted, if I am rightly informed, at one time to about five hundred itinerant, and four thousand local preachers. All these continued occasionally to communicate with the Church of England, their original source ; though they more frequently held communions among themselves ; and received the elements from those ministers of the Church of England, who were in fellowship with the Methodists, or served among them. And on the whole they appeared to give a decided preference to the ordinance, as administered by the Presbyters of the established Church ; but their modes of procedure being charged as irregular, they had every discouragement from the heads of the Church, and no hope of a settlement in it. Hence, having erected places of worship of their own, and being no bigots to Church government, they by degrees became more seldom occasional communicants in their parish Churches, and confined themselves to their own ministers and places of worship. Yet for a long while they were very reluctant to appear to

separate from the Church established, and to this day, I apprehend, the great body is Episcopalian ; and prefer that mode of government in its ancient simplicity, to the Presbyterian or Independent model.

At the time the Methodists arose, all the various denominations of dissenters from the established Church, had suffered a great decline from evangelical principles and real godliness ; and some much more than others, particularly the English Presbyterians. But many being awakened and revived by the labours of the itinerant evangelists, especially those of Mr. Whitfield, a spirit of renewed godliness returned in several congregations, and their stated pastors were roused to greater zeal and activity. The dissenters of all denominations thus evidently profited by the flame originally kindled by the ministers bred in the established Church. From their itinerant and most able helpers, decaying congregations invited pastors to settle over them ; new life was thus infused into the torpid mass. A multitude of Churches arose among them, where there had been none before. The Independents especially profited hereby, as most of the newly formed Societies preferred the Congregational model to the Presbyterian. Not that these pastors were such Independents by education or principle, as to have any radical objections, at least many of them, to the forms or order of the established Church, but being excluded by what was branded as Methodism, from any prospect of admittance into the ministry there, they

readily consented to preside over the Churches which called them to the pastoral office ; and thus also the Baptists as well as the Independents, have greatly enlarged their pale by similar accessions.

These itinerant preachers were men of lively and popular talents, and though not bred in the schools of the prophets, were often endued with great eloquence. Some of the more learned among the dissenters, regarded them indeed with a jealous eye, and felt mortified at the preference given to persons neither possessing the knowledge of languages, nor initiated into the mysteries of scientific literature ; but their numerous audiences bespoke the favour of the people. And without the advantages of an education for the ministry, they have not been destitute of excellent gifts for the use of edifying. They were in general men of good natural understanding, well read in the scriptures of their mother tongue, the chief book indeed which they studied. They were experimentally acquainted with the great and fundamental truths of religion ; they possessed a natural faculty of elocution, increased by the habit of frequent preaching. And what seemed infinitely superior to all the rest, they appeared deeply affected with the truths which they delivered ; and as exemplary in their walk and conversation, as laborious in the work of the ministry ; evidently delighting in the service, as their first and best wages.

Whilst these eminent revivers of evangelical truth, Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield, with their associates, were thus proceeding with increasing

zeal in their several spheres of usefulness, the great Head of the Church was pleased to raise up another singular personage, who contributed exceedingly to enlarge the pale of what was called Methodism, and to strengthen the hands of those who laboured in the work of God our Saviour.

The noble and elect LADY HUNTINGDON, had lived in the highest circle of fashion ; by birth a daughter of the House of Shirley, by marriage united with the Earl of Huntingdon, both bearing the royal arms of England, as descendants from her ancient monarchs.

In very early infancy when only nine years old, the sight of a corpse about her own age, conveying to the grave, engaged her to attend the burial. There the first impressions of deep seriousness about an eternal world, laid hold on her conscience : and with many tears she cried earnestly to God on the spot, that whenever he should be pleased to take her away, he would deliver her from all her fears, and give her a happy departure. She often afterwards visited the grave, and always preserved a lively sense of the affecting scene.

Though no views of evangelical truth had hitherto opened on her mind, yet even during her juvenile days, she frequently retired for prayer, to a particular closet where she could not be observed : and in all her little troubles found relief in pouring out her requests unto God. When she grew up, and was introduced into the world, she continued to pray that she might marry into a serious family.

None kept up more of the ancient dignity and decency than the house of Huntingdon. With the head of that family she accordingly became united. Lady Betty and Lady Margaret Hastings, his lordship's sisters, were women of singular excellence.

In this high estate she maintained a peculiar seriousness of conduct. Though sometimes at court, and visiting in the higher circles, she took no pleasure in the fashionable follies of the great. In the country she was the lady Bountiful among her neighbours and dependents; and going still about to establish her own righteousness, she endeavoured by prayer and fasting, and alms-deeds, to commend herself to the favour of the most High and most Holy.

The zealous preachers, who had been branded with the name of Methodists, had now awakened great attention in the land. Lady Margaret Hastings, happening to hear them, received the truth as it is in Jesus from their ministry; and was some years after united with the excellent Mr. Ingham, one of the first labourers in this plenteous harvest. Conversing with Lady Margaret one day on this subject, Lady Huntingdon was exceedingly struck with a sentiment she uttered, "that since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy as an angel." To any such sensation of happiness Lady Huntingdon felt that she was as yet an utter stranger.

A dangerous illness having soon after this brought her to the brink of the grave, the fear of death fell terribly upon her, and her conscience was greatly distressed. Hereupon she meditated sending for Bishop Benson, of Gloucester, who had been Lord Huntingdon's tutor, to consult him, and unburden her mind. Just at that time the words of Lady Margaret returned strongly to her recollection, and she felt an earnest desire, renouncing every other hope, to cast herself wholly upon Christ for life and salvation. She instantly from her bed lifted up her heart to Jesus the Saviour, with this importunate prayer ; and immediately all her distress and fear were removed, and she was filled with peace and joy in believing. Her disorder from that moment took a favourable turn ; she was restored to perfect health, and what was better, to newness of life. She determined thenceforward to present herself to God, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which she was now convinced was her reasonable service.

On her recovery, she sent a kind message to the Messrs. Wesleys, who were then preaching in the neighbourhood, that she was one with them in heart, cordially wishing them good speed in the name of the Lord, and assuring them of her determined purpose of living for Him, who had died for her.

The change thus suddenly wrought on her, Ladyship, became observable to all, in the open confession she made of the faith once delivered to the saints, and in the zealous support she began to give

to the work of God, amidst all the reproach with which it was attended.

To the noble circle in which Lady Huntingdon moved, such professions and conduct appeared wondrous strange ; but she had set her face as a flint, and refused to be ashamed of Christ and his cross. There were not wanting indeed some who under the guise of friendship, wished Lord Huntingdon to interpose his authority : but, however he differed from her Ladyship in sentiment, he continued to show her the same affection and respect. He desired, however, she would oblige him, by conversing with Bishop Benson on the subject, to which she readily acquiesced.

The Bishop was accordingly sent for, in order to reason with her Ladyship respecting her opinions and conduct. But she pressed him so hard with articles and homilies ; and so plainly and faithfully urged upon him the awful responsibility of his station under the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, that his temper was ruffled ; and he rose up in haste to depart, bitterly lamenting that he had ever laid his hands on George Whitfield, to whom he imputed, though without cause, the change wrought in her Ladyship. She called him back ; “ My Lord,” said she, “ mark my words, “ when you come upon your dying bed, that will “ be one of the few ordinations you will reflect “ upon with complacence.” It deserves remark, that Bishop Benson, on his dying bed, sent ten guineas to Mr. Whitfield, as a token of his favour



and approbation, and begged to be remembered by him in his prayers.

I hope the present venerable Bishop of Worcester will not be displeased if I record a similar instance of his candor lately reported to me. As he preaches frequently, he had observed a poor man remarkably attentive, and made him some little presents. After a while he missed his humble auditor, and meeting him, said, "John, how is it that I do not see you in the aisle as usual?" John, with some hesitation, replied, "My Lord, I hope you will not be offended, and I will tell you the truth. I went the other day to hear the Methodists, and I understood their plain words so much better, that I have attended them ever since." The Bishop put his hand into his pocket, and gave him a guinea, with words to this effect, "God bless you, and go where you can, receive the greatest profit to your soul."

I know no place more proper to preserve another anecdote, which I received from my excellent friend, the Rev. Mr. Talbot, of St. Giles, Reading. When Archbishop Secker was laid on his couch with a broken thigh, and sensible of his approaching end, my dear departed friend, who had lived in great intimacy with him, and received his preferment from him, visited him at Lambeth. Before they parted, "You will pray with me, Talbot," said the archbishop. Mr. Talbot rose and went to look for a prayer book, "That is not what I want now," said the dying prelate, "kneel

“down by me, and pray for me in the way I know you are used to do.” With which command my dear brother readily complied, and prayed earnestly from his heart for his dying friend, whom he saw no more.

Lady Huntingdon's heart was now truly engaged to God, and she resolved, to her best ability, to lay herself out to do good. The poor around her were the natural objects of her attention. These she bountifully relieved in their necessities, visited in sickness, conversed with, and led them to their knees, praying with them and for them. The late Prince of Wales, one day at court, asked a lady of fashion, Lady Charlotte E. where my Lady Huntingdon was, that she so seldom visited the circle. Lady Charlotte, replied with a sneer, “I suppose praying with her beggars.” The Prince shook his head, and said, “Lady Charlotte, when I am dying, I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of Lady Huntingdon's mantle, to lift me up with her to Heaven.”

During my Lord Huntingdon's life she warmly espoused the cause of God and truth, though her means of usefulness were necessarily circumscribed, and her family engagements occupied much of her time and attention. On his demise, she was left the entire management of her children, and of their fortunes, which she improved with the greatest fidelity. Become her own mistress, she resolved to devote herself wholly to the service of Christ, and the souls redeemed by his blood. Her zealous

heart embraced cordially all whom she esteemed real Christians, whatever their denomination or opinions might be, but being herself in sentiment more congenial with Mr. Whitfield, than the Mr. Westleys, she favoured those especially who were the ministers of the Calvinistic persuasion, according to the literal sense of the articles of the Church of England. And with an intention of giving them a greater scene of usefulness, she opened her house in Park-street, for the preaching of the Gospel, supposing as a peeress of the realm, that she had an indisputable right to employ as her family chaplains, those ministers of Church whom she patronised. On the week days her kitchen was filled with the poor of the flock, for whom she provided instruction ; and on the Lord's day the great and noble were invited to spend the evening in her drawing-room, where Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Romaine, Mr. Jones, and other ministers of Christ, addressed to them faithfully all the words of this life, and were heard with apparently deep and serious attention.

Lady Huntingdon now became the open and avowed patroness of all the zealous ministers of Christ, especially of those who were suffering for the testimony of Jesus. Mr. Romaine, on his being turned out of St. George's Church, received particular tokens of her favour ; and though till then unknown to her, I was honored with her expressions of kindness and approbation, when, as yet a young man, I suffered such persecution from Bishop Hume, and the University of Oxford, and

was so unjustly dispossessed of my cure in that city ; without a charge, except that I endeavoured to fill it with the knowledge of the doctrine of my crucified Lord, which was construed as an intention of bringing this man's blood upon them. All the parties concerned in these transactions are gone into their graves, and whilst I record them, I am ready to touch my last hour. I can with joy look forward to the day of my Lord ; he knoweth the simplicity and godly sincerity with which I then acted.\*

The limits to which I am restricted forbid my descending into a variety of particulars, that I may advert to the subsequent steps taken by this venerable woman, more immediately and extensively to spread the knowledge of salvation, and to

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\* On this occasion I waited on Archbishop Secker, at Lambeth, by whom I had been ordained, for redress against an act which appeared to us glaring oppression. He had, during his filling the see of Oxford, received many complaints against me, but always heard with candor, and spoke to me with kindness. When I stated to him the situation in which I was placed, and begged I might be permitted to know, and answer any charges which were brought against me ; and that, as he ordained me, and knew my sentiments fully before, he would not suffer me to be borne down by the abuse of power, and driven from my cure with ignominy, which could not but affect all my future prospects in life. " Sir," said he, " whilst I was your Bishop, I always protected you. There are many complaints, that multitudes of the young students follow you, and that there were disturbances at your Church : but whether you gave the offence, or they took it, I cannot take upon myself to determine. I am no longer your Bishop, and cannot interfere."

Bishop Hume, soon after translated to Salisbury, happened one day after dinner, to be asked by Mr. Rogers, of Warginsler, " Pray, my Lord, what was the real cause of all that noise made about Hume at Oxford ?" The Bishop, with some embarrassment, said " Say nothing to me on that subject, it has given me the greatest uneasiness." I heard this from the person to whom Mr Rogers mentioned it with pleasure : I hope the great Head of the Church forgave the injustice done to his servant.

restore the desolations of that Church, which is the great object of this history.

The illness of her younger son, which proved fatal, had led her to Brighthelmstone, for the sake of sea-bathing. There her active spirit having produced some awakening among the people, she erected a little Chapel contiguous to her house, that the Gospel might be preached to them. This was the first fruits of her great increase ; it was enlarged, and that not sufficing to contain the congregation, it was a third time taken down and rebuilt. Many can say they were born there. The success attending this first effort encouraged greater. Bath, the resort of fashion, beheld an elegant and commodious place of worship, raised by the same liberal hand. Oathall, Bretby, and various other places, received the Gospel by her means. At first she confined herself to the ministers of the established Church, as her preachers, many of whom obeyed her invitation, and laboured in the places where she resided : but her zeal enlarged with her success, and a great variety of persons throughout the kingdom, begging her assistance, in London, and many of the most populous cities, she set up the standard of the Gospel, and purchased, built, or hired, Chapels vast and commodious, for the performance of divine service. As these multiplied exceedingly through England, Ireland, and Wales, the ministers who had before laboured for her Ladyship, were unequal to the task ; and some unwilling to move in a sphere so extensive, and which began to be branded as irre-

gular, and to meet great opposition : yet many persevered in their cordial services, when summoned to the work, and were content to bear the cross. As the work greatly enlarged beyond her power to supply the Chapels with regular ministers, Lady Huntingdon resolved to employ the same methods as Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield had pursued with so much success before. She invited laymen of piety and abilities, to exhort and keep up the congregations she had established.

In order to provide proper persons for the work, she now retired into Wales, where she erected a College for training up young men to the ministry. From thence she dispatched the requisite supplies for the increased congregations under her patronage ; and as the calls were often urgent, her students were too frequently thrust forth into the harvest, before they had made any considerable proficiency in the languages, or sacred literature, in which it had been her intention they should be instructed. Few of them knew much more than their native tongue, yet being men of strong sense, and real devotedness to God, their ministry was very greatly blessed, and the accounts of their success animated her to greater exertions. They were itinerant—moved from congregation to congregation, in a rotation established ; and her correspondence with them to regulate and provide a constant supply, was a labour to which her active spirit alone was equal.

Many of these sought a settlement, either in the Church or among the dissenters, in preference to

a life of itinerancy ; and as they were under no bonds but those of choice, they often quitted her connection. I think not less than fifty are now labouring in the Church, or among the dissenters, with benediction. Their places were always supplied, and others offered to fill the ranks, as death, or retirement from the service, thinned their numbers.

Though Lady Huntingdon devoted the whole of her substance to the Gospel, yet it is not a little surprising, how her income sufficed for the immensity of expence in which she was necessarily involved. Her jointure was no more than twelve hundred pounds a-year ; and only after the death of her son, a few years preceding her own, she received the addition of another thousand. She often involved herself in expences for building Chapels, which she found it burthensome to discharge. But the Lord brought her always honourably through her engagements, and provided a supply when her own was exhausted.

To the age of fourscore and upwards, she maintained all the vigour of youth ; and though in her latter years the contraction of her throat reduced her almost wholly to a liquid diet, her spirits never seemed to fail her ; and to the very last days of her life, her active mind was planning still greater and more extensive schemes of usefulness, for the universal spread of the Gospel of Christ.

Lady Huntingdon was rather above the middle size. Her presence noble, and commanding res-

pect ; her address singularly engaging ; her intelligence acute ; her diligence indefatigable ; and the constant labour of her thought and correspondence inconceivable. Never was creature apparently more dead to all self-indulgence, or more liberally disposed to supply the calls of the Gospel. I believe, during the many years I was honoured with her friendship, she often possessed no more than the gown she wore. I have often said, she was one of the poor who lived on her own bounty ; but her most distinguishing excellence was, the fervent zeal which always burned in her bosom, to make known the Gospel of the grace of God ; which no disappointments quenched, no labours slackened, no opposition discouraged, no progress of years abated : it flamed strongest in her latest moments. The world has seldom seen such a character—thousands and tens of thousands will have reason, living and dying, to bless her memory, as having been the happy instrument of bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light ; and multitudes saved by her instrumentality, have met her in the regions of glory, to rejoice together in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

But it may be said, was she a perfect character ? No. This is not the lot of mortals on this side the grave. When the moon walketh in her brightness, her shadows are most visible.

Lady Huntingdon was in her temper warm and sanguine—her predilections for some, and her prejudices against others, were sometimes too hastily



adopted—and by these she was led to form conclusions not always correspondent with truth and wisdom.

The success attending her efforts, seemed to impress her mind with a persuasion, that a particular benediction would rest upon whomsoever she should send forth ; and rendered her choice not always judicious : though seldom were there ever less offences in so extended a work.

She had so long directed the procedures of her connection, that she too seldom asked the advice of the judicious ministers who laboured with her ; and bore not passive contradiction.

I am the historian of truth, as far as I know it. She needs no posthumous fame to blazon her worth ; and she is past far beyond all human censure which can affect her. The great Head of the Church hath, I have full confidence, decided her character, pitied her infirmities, pardoned her iniquities, and welcomed her to glory, with well done, good and faithful servant.\*

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\* I insert the following anecdotes not unworthy preservation. The famous infidel, Lord Bolingbroke, in conference one day with her Ladyship, addressed her, " My Lady, when you please to command my pen, it shall be drawn in your service, and admitting the Bible to be true, I shall have little apprehension of maintaining the doctrines of predestination and grace against all your revilers "

My Lord Huntingdon, her son, unhappily, was a disciple of the infidel school, yet however opposite to her Ladyship in sentiments, he highly revered his venerable mother. A great prelate one day in conversation, said, " I wish, my Lord you would speak to Lady H. she has just erected a preaching place close to my palace wall." " Gladly," says his Lordship, " but will you do me the favour to inform me what to urge, for my mother really believes the Bible."

At her death, Lady Huntingdon left her Chapels to trustees and executors, for the continuance of the same plan ; which they have pursued with some measure of the same disinterested zeal, and with increasing success. Not less than one hundred thousand persons continue to have the Gospel preached to them by their means. The same steps are pursued in England, Wales and Ireland ; and though the property left by her Ladyship for carrying on the work of God, was basely seized at her death, by the Americans of Georgia and Carolina, where it lay, and her assets in England, her Chapels excepted, were found not sufficient for her engagements ; yet, however unable to recover her estates, all claims have been discharged ; and the Chapels, according to her will, maintained with less incumbrances than at her decease.

The seminary in Wales ceased at her Ladyship's death, the lease being just expired, and no endowment left, her income dying with her : but a new college, on a plan more promising for literature, has been established at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire, near London ; and under the superintending care of trustees appointed for that purpose. A number of students have been already educated there, and many are gone forth, now preaching the Gospel with much acceptance, from this seminary. It cannot, indeed, be supposed, that in the course of three or four years, the term allotted for their education, much scientific attainments can be made ; yet we have the pleasure of finding by experience, that in this time diligently improved, a competent

knowledge of the sacred languages may be obtained ; and what is more important and desirable, by the constant exercise of speaking before the president, students, and others, a facility and propriety of address is acquired, highly desirable for them in their future ministrations. Into this seminary none are admitted, but after strict enquiry of their characters, and repeated examination into their Christian experience, and natural abilities. They are required to bring recommendations, and authentic testimonials, from the ministers and others with whom they have been accustomed to worship. They are not received too young, nor much advanced in life ; usually between the age of twenty and thirty. They are expected to give the most satisfactory account of their own real conversion to God, and of the reasons which engage them to devote themselves to the ministry. They must appear possessed of acute, or at least of promising faculties for improvement. And as the greatest attention is paid to their education, and the disposition with which they are admitted, secures the most unremitting application to study, their improvement hath been hitherto remarkably rapid, considering the necessity of beginning in most instances with the first rudiments of grammar in each of the languages.

This institution promises the greatest utility. The education and maintenance of the students is entirely free : and at the expiration of the term of their studies, when they have been examined, and judged fit to proceed to the ministry, they are un-

der no restrictions, but may apply for admission into the established Church, or any other denomination of Christians. If Christ be but preached, the end of our seminary is answered.

Thus, among those who bear the name of *Methodists*, there are three distinct bodies, the features of which are very discriminating. Indeed, like the term *Pietist*, the name of *Methodist* is often applied to serious persons, who have no connection immediately with the Societies of Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, or the successors of Lady Huntingdon. But each of these, though denominated by the general name of *Methodists*, has a discipline and regulations peculiar to themselves : these I shall cursorily remark.

1st. The body of Arminian Methodists, who derive their name and order from Mr. Wesley, pursue the plan laid down by him. During his life, such was his personal influence, that it rendered his recommendations the general rule of their Society ; so that all his people, throughout the British dominions, to which also America might be added, looked up to him as their president and director. His time was spent in one continued voyage or journey, visiting regularly every Society in the vast circle of his connection, and usually preaching every day, and frequently twice or thrice. He accustomed all his congregation to his plan of itinerancy and a frequent change of ministers. A *general Conference annually*, fixed the stations of the preachers, and settled two or three within a certain dis-

strict, round which they moved in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, generally preaching somewhere every evening, and holding Societies for prayer and mutual exhortation. All who joined in these, contributed a small sum weekly for the support of the general work, which stewards appointed, regularly accounted for. By this a provision was made for the maintenance of the preachers, according to the number of their families, or occasional necessities. The profits arising from publications, circulated from a press of their own, very considerably increase this fund for the support of their cause. Sometimes the stay of the preachers in their rounds is continued for more than one year, but this is fixed at the general conference. The same steps have been pursued since Mr. Wesley's death : they admit no president, but a few of the most able preachers sway their deliberations. On the whole, considering the nature of such a body, united merely by voluntary association, it is amazing that more disputes and divisions have not arisen. Their zeal, their activity, and usefulness, continue undiminished. America, and the Leeward Islands have been greatly benefited by their labours, as well as the several parts of the British dominions in Europe ; and the impulse given to this great machine, is continued in the same line of direction by those who sit in the annual Conference. For some time past they have had an ordination among themselves, and now the people generally communicate with their own teachers : their connection with the established Church is hereby greatly weakened ; and it will probably issue in a com-

plete separation, not from any aversion to episcopal government, but from despair of procuring episcopal ordination for the pastors whom they have chosen.

2nd. The followers of Mr. Whitfield are, in the aggregate, a body nearly as numerous as the former, but not so compact and united. Their principles being Calvinistic, recommended them especially to the various denominations of dissenters, and to those of the reformed religion in Scotland and abroad. A great number of these joined Mr. Whitfield, as well as multitudes who left the established Church. These were formed into congregations in diverse places, who, though considering themselves as one body, have not the same union and interchange as the followers of Mr. Wesley. The first and principal of the Churches, at Tottenham-court, observes the Church ceremonies and liturgy, the others use in general free prayer. Yet these consider themselves not as distinct independent Churches, but formed under a foederal connection : and some of these have no stated pastor, but are supplied by a rotation of ministers. They have an ordination among themselves ; and where there is a stationary ministry, they still hold connection with each other, and come up as invited or called upon to the greater congregations, for a fixed space according to an appointed routine. All these places of worship are supported, not like Mr. Wesley's, by a general fund ; but the expences of the meeting, and salaries of ministers, are provided by the several con-

gregations, and collected and expended in each by stewards chosen out of the principal people. The great Chapels, in London, are managed by trustees, who were first appointed by Mr. Whitfield himself; and on their several demises, have most faithfully and disinterestedly devolved the trust on others; men hitherto above suspicion, and themselves the most liberal supporters of the cause entrusted to their care: and thus so far from diminishing since Mr. Whitfield's death, the numbers who have joined them are vastly increased. These are every day growing more into bodies of real dissenters, and losing the attachment to the Church, which was at first strongly preserved. Yet they continue very different from the Independents, whom they most resemble, in a variety of particulars—respecting itinerancy, Church government, change of ministers, and mutual and more open communion. These congregations are very numerous, and very seriously attended. No where is the life of godliness more apparently preserved. The lay preachers, however, are comparatively become few, the most having been ordained among themselves; and the body is not governed by a general Conference, nor the work supported by a common stock: but each congregation provides for its own expences. Some Chapels around London, depend for their supplies of preachers to be furnished from the great bodies in the metropolis. The richer congregations are always ready to assist the poorer in building or enlarging places of worship, and in helping a recent and weaker Society,

till they become sufficiently numerous, and able to defray their own expences.

3d. As the Countess of Huntingdon left all her numerous Chapels in the hands of devisees, they pursue exactly the same method of procedure as she did. A number of ministers of the established Church, and especially from Wales, where she long resided, continue to supply in rotation the larger Chapels of her erection ; and those who were her students in her college in Wales, or have since been educated at Cheshunt, with others approved and chosen for the work, are dispersed through Great Britain and Ireland. All these ministers serve in *succession* ; not depending upon the congregations in which they minister for their support, but on the trustees, under whose direction they move. Every congregation furnishes a stipulated maintenance to the minister during his residence among them, and his travelling expences : but in no congregation do they remain as stated pastors, but expect a successor, as soon as the time affixed for their stay is completed. Nor can any of the congregation dismiss the person resident, or procure a change, but by application to the trustees, such being the conditions on which they engage to supply them with a succession of ministers. If any minister is peculiarly useful, and request is made that his stay may be prolonged, it is usually complied with : nay, sometimes at the desire of the people he is allowed to settle among them, liable however to a call of two or three months annually, to be employed in the work at large. And if any



minister is not acceptable, or his ministry beneficial, his stay is shortened, and he is removed to another station. Two rules are established and known : 1st. That if any person leaves the connection, to which he has no tie, but choice, he is admitted into it no more ; though the trustees as cordially rejoice in his usefulness in another denomination of Christians, as in their own. 2nd. It is also constantly enforced, that if any man departs from the Calvinistic articles of the Church of England, or incurs reproach by any accusations of immorality, he is summoned to exculpate himself before the trustees, and heard with all candor ; but if the fact be established, he is dismissed, without any possibility of being ever again admitted to minister in any of their congregations. The bent of these congregations is strongly to the established Church. Her liturgy is used in public worship in all the principal Chapels. Ministers of the establishment, such is the lenity of the times, serve without interruption. Indeed, all the persecution for religious differences is become so opposite to the spirit of the nation, that these things usually pass without censure. Probably the bishops themselves wish not to alienate large bodies of the most active and exemplary Christians, farther from the Church, by useless irritation.

It is observable, that all these great bodies, though driven to worship in places of their own erection, in order to secure the preaching of such evangelical principles as they cannot find in the churches in general, would be happy to have the

cause removed, that hath compelled them to these expedients ; and were the bishops and clergy zealous to inculcate the great fundamentals of Gospel truth, and to adorn the doctrine by a life of spiritual religion, the greater part of these partial seceders would probably return to the forms and worship of the established Church. As it is, their numbers every day increase ; and whilst carelessness and lukewarmness cause the noblest edifices to be deserted, every little meeting is crowded with hearers, wherever a minister, earnest and evangelical, labours from his heart, for the salvation of men's souls.\*

Such has been the progress of what is called *Methodism* in the great bodies that more immediately bear that name: but it hath spread in a prodigious manner, both among those of the Church

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\* An awful proof of this I very lately received from a Clergyman, on whose veracity I can fully depend. He had preached in the morning, where the lecturer of one of the noblest churches in the heart of the city of London read prayers, and being indisposed, he expressed a wish, that he could get his lectureship supplied that afternoon. My friend humanely offered his services, and the lecturer begged him to be punctual at three. After a walk of two miles, he entered the Church a few minutes before the time, and was surprized not to perceive an individual in the church, except the boy who was tolling the bell with the surplice on his arm. He went into the vestry, and was but just sat down, when a man in black opened the door, and walking up addressed him with a very consequential air—“Pray, Sir, who may you be?” Who am I?—such a one—and come to “preach for your lecturer this afternoon.” “There was no body here last Sunday,” said this important personage, as the clock struck, “and I see “no body to day.” Upon which, taking up his hat, he stalked off with dignity, saying, “Let us depart in peace,” and left the clergyman overwhelmed with indignation and astonishment. These things ought not so to be. On the Lord's day—in the midst of the city of London—in one of the most beautiful Churches—not an individual attended for two successive sabbaths ! There must be a cause for effects so awful.

as well as the dissenters from it ; and has been the means of re-kindling the zeal of very many, so as to produce a vast alteration for the better in the conduct of thousands and tens of thousands. Predilection for the establishment, strongly attaches many to it, who have received their religious impressions from one or other of these Methodist Societies, or from some of their own clergy, who lie under the imputation of being *methodistically inclined*, that is, such as *literally* and with *apparent zeal* inculcate the doctrinal articles they have subscribed, and live in a state of greater piety and separation from the world, than the generality of their brethren. The number of these is of late amazingly increased. Where before scarcely a man of this stamp could be found, some hundreds, as rector or curates in the established Church, inculcate the doctrines which are branded with Methodism ; and every where, throughout the kingdom, one or more, and sometimes several, are to be found within the compass of a few miles, who approve themselves faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard. They naturally associate among themselves, and separate from the corruption which is in the world. Every where they carry the stamp of peculiarity, and are marked by their brethren. Though carefully conforming to established rules, and strictly regular, they are every where objects of reproach, because their conduct cannot but reflect on those who choose not to follow such examples. They pay conscientious attention to the souls of their parishioners ; converse with them on spiritual subjects, wherever they visit ; encourage

prayer and praise in the several families under their care ; often meet them for these purposes ; and engage them to meet and edify one another. Their exemplary conversation procures them reverence from the poor of the flock, as their faithful rebukes often bring upon them the displeasure of the worldling, the dissipated, and the careless. They join in none of the fashionable amusements of the age, frequent not the theatres, or scenes of dissipation, court no favour of the great, or human respects ; their time and services are better employed in the more important labours of the ministry, preaching the word in season, out of season, and counting their work their best wages. They labour, indeed, under many discouragements. All the superior orders of the clergy shun their society. They have been often treated by their diocesans with much insolence and oppression. They can number no Bishop, nor scarcely a dignitary among them. Yet their number, strength, and respectability, continue increasing. May they grow into an host, like the host of God.

By the labours of these most excellent men, the congregations of Methodists and dissenters are greatly enlarged ; and though during their lives and incumbency, they fill their Churches, and diminish the number of separatists ; yet on their death or removal, they unintentionally add all the most serious part of their flocks to their brethren who are of a like spirit. For when the people have lost their good clergyman, and having no choice of a successor, find a man placed over them :

of an utterly different temper and conduct ; in doctrine erroneous, as in his life unexemplary ; they are naturally driven to seek the same means of edification to which they have been accustomed, and which God hath given them the grace to know how truly to appreciate : as they have no such attachment to Church walls, as to be confined to them, where Ichabod is written thereon. When therefore they can hear nothing truly edifying from their parish minister, they search out some Methodist Chapel, or dissenting meeting, where the evangelical and reformed doctrines are taught, and where a people like themselves, worshipping God in spirit, assemble for mutual edification ; and if they can find no such, they raise one ; associating among themselves, and appointing the most zealous and best informed to edify them ; or making application for such to some one of the bodies of Methodists or Dissenters.

It is a pleasing feature of the present day, that the spirit of toleration and candor appears of late more diffused, and persecution discountenanced, though not utterly discontinued. During the first struggles of Methodism, many harsh and severe measures were taken, and wicked or prejudiced magistrates pushed the penal laws against sectaries to the extreme. Of late they have almost wholly slept, and those who were formerly despised and hated, at present are under a less odium from their profession, and more respected by their brethren. Their numbers have given them consequence in the national scale. The perilous times have engaged

the chief attention of their countrymen. It is not a day to discourage religion, when impiety and infidelity are come in like a flood. Every government must perceive, that those citizens are most valuable, whose obedience and peaceableness are strengthened by religious principles.

The state of real godliness among us in general, has for some time past certainly been on the increase. The clergy in the Church, many of them at least, have been engaged to change the strain of moral preaching, for more frequent notice of the orthodox principles of Christ's divinity and atonement, and the necessity of true holiness. But it must be confessed, that even truth itself freezes upon the lips of those whose heart is not inflamed with the love of it ; and who do not feel for others' souls by having felt the importance of seeking the salvation of their own.

The orthodox dissenters maintain a respectable profession. The Arian and Socinian congregations, which a few men of learning and philosophic attainments sought to support, have dwindled almost to nothing ; and the only large and zealous bodies are those in which the ancient reformed doctrines are maintained with all their vigour ; and this chiefly by ministers, who derive their birth from one or other of the great Methodist Societies.

To this source also are to be chiefly traced the zealous and successful efforts made of late by the *Missionary Society*, which have been already men-

tioned, to send the Gospel among the heathen ; and it may justly be reckoned among the singular and happy effects, which have already resulted from this attempt to evangelize the lands of darkness and despair, that such an endeared union and cordiality hath been restored among the various denominations of Christians, who had so long stood in a state of repulsion from each other. They have now agreed to sacrifice educational prejudices, and narrow bigotry, on the altar of Christian love. English and Scots, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Methodists and Independents, have united in the great object of a heathen mission, and solemnly pledged themselves to each other, that neither politics, nor our different peculiarities, shall mingle with the Gospel truth, which we desire to impart to the nations, but that all who go on this self-denying service shall have but one injunction from us, to preach and teach Jesus Christ in primitive simplicity ; prescribing no exclusive Church order, or form of discipline ; but wishing every man to maintain true communion with his brethren, and whenever success shall crown their labours, and congregations be formed among our black, or brown, or olive coloured brethren, to avoid as much as possible all disputes about matters non-essential, to follow to the best of their judgments, the scriptural model of the Gospel Church ; and to maintain carefully among themselves, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Nor hath this noble attempt failed to attract the notice of our foreign brethren, whose correspondence hath testified their high delight at our commencements, who are pray-

ing for its abundant success, and in America, and on the Continent, have been roused up to similar exertions, and are preparing to run the same race with us, where emulation is laudable, and ambition to excel, a truly Christian grace.

The Missionary Society hath also produced the happiest effects at home. Many of its members have begun to exert themselves vigorously to spread the evangelical doctrines in their various neighbourhoods. Different itinerant Societies have been established, in order to send instruction to the poor in the villages where the Gospel is not preached ; to open schools for their children ; to converse with the ignorant, and visit the sick ; and many congregations every Lord's day, send out some of their most zealous and intelligent members for these gracious purposes. By these means much attention hath been awakened in the souls of many, and promising appearances give good hope through grace, that this labour of love will not be in vain in the Lord. Probably not less than five hundred places for divine worship have been opened within the last three years.

Many of the episcopal clergy, and others of sound principles, and faithful hearts, who for reasons apparently to them justifiable, had withheld themselves from the more enlarged society for missions, composed of all denominations, have felt themselves either reproved or excited to make some similar efforts among their brethren ; confining themselves exclusively to the dominant profession. Their



Society is yet in embryo, but it will not want encouragement ; and all who have the good of souls at heart must therein rejoice, if the Gospel of Christ be more diffusively spread. Their success will gladden our hearts, and the more enlarged and vigorous their efforts, the more shall they be praised.

It would be truly happy if these movements on every side engaged the attention of the two long established Societies among us, for *propagating the Gospel in foreign parts*, and for *promoting Christian knowledge*. Their funds are immense, and adequate to any undertaking. It is to be lamented that those, who have been chosen by them hitherto, have too often been selected with so little regard to missionary talents ; and that their vast revenues have not answered any very considerably useful purpose ; at least none such as might have been hoped, if their choice had been more judicious, and the plans for promoting the Gospel more vigorously pursued. Should a happy turn be given to these Societies, and men of God arise, and be patronised by them, as they have all the countenance and help of government to forward their efforts, it is impossible to say what a door of entrance might be opened to the Gentiles, in the yet unexplored, and unattempted regions of the world ; especially in New Holland ; the Isles of the Pacific Ocean ; the northern parts of America ; and above all, in the immense regions of Africa, still to us a *terra incognita*. A glorious scene ! but I fear a blessing rather to be hoped than realised in my day, now drawing to its evening.

I am seeking the spiritual Church of Christ, and I am filled with comfort at the spread of the Gospel in our land. Multitudes of the *established Church*, ministers and people, are blessed monuments of redeeming love. Multitudes of *every other denomination* stand high in faithful and vigorous exertions for the glory of our common Lord. I am sure he will say, I have much people in this place. And amidst all our miseries, which are not few, and our prospects, which, as a nation, have been abundantly discouraging, this is the great sheet anchor of hope to every real believer. If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have shewed us, as Manoah's wife observed, such and such things.

It is true we have liberally partaken of the fashionable philosophy, and among the wise, the mighty, and the noble, the empire of scepticism is widely extended, and faith despised as fable. It hath descended to the menial servant behind the chair, and to the drayman, who can blaspheme and deride religion. But against this enemy that cometh in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord continues to lift up the standard of his Gospel, and many are not ashamed to fight manfully under the banner of the cross. Indeed, the mode of the contest is changed : it is not now between true religion and false religion, but between true religion and no religion.

Before I quit this subject, it may be worth a moment's attention, to sketch a portrait of the two great characters who eminently contributed to this

revival of religion among us. As both favoured me with their cordial regard, and though more in unison with the one than the other, I have ever desired to give honour to whom honour is due, and hope never to be ashamed of the friendship of JOHN WESLEY.

JOHN WESLEY was of the inferior size, his visage marked with intelligence ; singularly neat and plain in his dress ; a little cast in his eye, observable on particular occasions ; upright, graceful, and remarkably active. His understanding, naturally excellent and acute, was highly stored with the attainments of literature : and he possessed a fund of anecdote and history, that rendered his company as entertaining as instructive. His mode of address in public was chaste and solemn, though not illumined with those coruscations of eloquence which marked, if I may use that expression, the discourses of his rival George Whitfield ; but there was a divine simplicity, a zeal, a venerableness in his manner, which commanded attention, and never forsook him in his latest years ; when at fourscore, he retained still all the freshness of vigorous old age. His health was remarkably preserved amidst a scene of labour and perpetual exertions of mind and body, to which few would have been equal. Never man possessed greater personal influence over the people connected with him. Nor was it an easy task to direct so vast a machine, where amidst so many hundred wheels in motion, some moved eccentrically, and hardly yielded to the impulse of the main spring. I need not speak

of the exemplariness of his life, too many eyes were upon him to admit of his halting ; nor could his weight have been maintained a moment longer, than the fullest conviction impressed his people, that he was an eminently favoured saint of God, and as distinguished for his holy walk, as for his vast abilities, indefatigable labour, and singular usefulness.

His enemies reviled him, and would if possible rob him of the meed of well-deserved honour, by imputing to him objects below the prize he had in view. Never was a more disinterested character ; but he was a man, and he must have been more than man, if with the consciousness of his own devotedness, the divine blessing on his labours, and the high admiration in which he was held by his followers, he had not sometimes thought of himself more highly than he ought to think. We exhibit no faultless monsters. Elias was a man of like passions as ourselves.

His singular situation led him to imagine that the glorious Head of the Church favoured him with especial interpositions in his behalf, which he was sometimes ready to construe as miraculous.

He yielded a too credulous ear to the reports and pretensions of others, and was thus often the dupe of ignorance and presumption.

He hastily at times advanced, what farther information, or maturer judgment compelled him to retract or soften.

In the article of marriage he acted contrary to the celibacy he professed to recommend ; but this change of sentiment and conduct implied nothing criminal, unless it were the precipitancy of his former determination.

His rooted aversion to the doctrine called Calvinistic, might be supposed to proceed from a conscientious apprehension, that they had an unfavourable aspect on the practice of spiritual religion, however groundless such supposition was in reality, and however evident the contrary effects appeared in those who held them. But his bitterness and asperity towards those who defended them, and his harsh imputations on the God they worshipped, whatever provocations he might plead, were utterly inexcusable.

But above all, that which appeared in Mr. John Wesley, the most censurable part of his conduct, was his very unfair statement of the arguments of his Calvinistic adversaries, which in a man of his acuteness of intellect, will hardly admit the plea of unintentional mistake.

I am called upon to speak the truth, and I do it from my heart, without respect of persons, to the best of my knowledge. Mr. Wesley is gone to give an account of himself to his proper Judge, by whom I doubt not all his iniquity is pardoned, and his infirmities covered. And now that envy and enmity have been some time laid asleep in his grave, I rejoice in observing his character rise in general estimation, and most highly respected by

those who knew him best. It will now hardly be a question with any man, whether he would **not** rather have been John Wesley, who died not **worth** ten pounds, than Lavington, Bishop of **Exeter**, who so bitterly reviled him\*

GEORGE WHITFIELD was the son of an inn-keeper at Gloucester. From his early youth he had received deep impressions of religion ; and he carried with him to the University of Oxford, a seriousness of mind very uncommon. He began his active career, even before he was in orders, visiting the prisons, and instructing the poor. Bishop Benson was so delighted with his early piety, that he ordained him at the age of twenty-one. And his first essay was a striking specimen of his future popularity, being heard with the most uncommon and awakened concern. His person was manly, and grew large as he advanced in years, his voice remarkably musical, and capable of the most various intonations, with a natural eloquence, too singular not to command the most profound attention. His manner was often highly

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\* I cannot suppress an anecdote respecting this inveterate enemy of Methodists and Moravians. The author of these volumes had been educated under the tuition of that venerable servant of Christ, Samuel Walker, minister of Truro. After studying at Oxford, intending to enter into holy orders, he applied to this Bishop, with a testimonial from the country, signed by this apostolic labourer, Mr. Mitchel, rector of Verrian, and Mr. Penrose, vicar of Gluvias, men in the nearest intimacy with Mr Walker, and clergymen of the first respectability in the diocese ; but the Bishop refused to counter sign the testimonial, as " of men worthy of credit," and assigned as his reason, that this eminent saint of God "**PREACHED FAITH WITHOUT WORKS** !" It has been long since decided whose works have been approved before the great Judge of quick and dead.

graceful and oratorical ; and though a cast in his eye, strongly marked, prevented the vivid impression which that organ is peculiarly suited to make, yet no man with such a disadvantage ever looked with stronger sensibility : and after a second hearing the defect was forgotten. Never man possessed a greater command of the human passions, or better knew the way to the consciences of his hearers : he had arrows in his quiver, that himself only knew how to sharpen. His literary attainments were moderate, though not defective in the learned languages ; but his thorough acquaintance with the Scripture, and the peculiar art of introducing and illustrating every subject he treated, not only won the ear to listen, but left an impression on the mind never to be effaced. His labours in both hemispheres were immense ; his courage undaunted ; his zeal unquenchable ; he fell a martyr to his work. The violence of his exertions often shook his constitution, whilst the more placid Wesley, with equal constancy of preaching, preserved his health to fourscore and upwards, unimpaired. Perhaps no man since the days of St. Paul, not even Luther himself, was ever personally blest to the call and conversion of so many souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, as George Whitfield. The immense collections he made for charitable purposes, sharpened the tongue of slander. Time hath affixed the seal of integrity to all his procedures. He was reviled for his unguarded expressions, and some enthusiastic flights ; but he disarmed his enemies by ingenuous acknowledgments and correction of

his mistakes. How a youth surrounded with such popularity, and conscious of his own powers, was preserved from hatching the old Serpent's egg, laid in every human heart, is wonderful. The keen eye of malevolence was upon him ready to seize occasion against him, or to make it ; and it is a proof of no inconsiderable excellence, where so many watched for his halting, that amidst the most virulent abuse, so little could be found *justly* to accuse him. They who knew him best must witness, how holy and unblameably he had his conversation in the world. Indeed he was so taken up with the unwearied labours of his ministry, in preaching, religious exercises, and advice to those who were daily applying to him, that he had sometimes scarcely leisure for necessary food. The very things for which he was abused, he esteemed his glory ; and resolved to spend and be spent in the service of the souls for whom Christ died. But he had his spots, and so hath the sun. He would have himself acknowledged many more than the nearest of his friends, or the bitterest of his enemies could discover. He is now alike beyond censure or commendation. What I remarked in him, I will speak and not be ashamed.

In his preaching he sometimes pushed the ludicrous to the debasement of the dignity of the sacred ministry. He told a story so well, that it seduced him occasionally to pursue a vein of humour, more suited to excite risibility than to awaken seriousness ; though some impressive truth always closed the relation.



The Orphan house of Georgia, which he adopted with too partial affection, seems to have engaged him in difficulties and immensity of expence, greater than any utility which ever appeared to be derived from it ; and the vast collections he made for it, though faithfully applied, gave a handle to the slanders of suspicion.

He too frequently indulged in censures of the clergy, which however just they might be, seemed the effect of resentment, and would rather tend to exasperate than conciliate their attention. Yet it is well known he was remarkably kind spirited, and averse to controversy and its bitterness ; and his most intimate friends will bear me witness, that his temper was as amiable, and his conversation as singularly cheerful, as his piety was deep and sincere.

On the whole, as a man, as a Christian, as a minister, we shall not I fear look upon his like again speedily. After passing through evil report and good report, during more than thirty years of incessant labour, he entered into his rest in America, which had peculiarly benefitted by his visits ; having crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, to preach the everlasting Gospel, with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Whatever ignorance of his real character, the fatuity of prejudice, or the insolence of pride may have suggested, the day is coming, when his great and adorable Master will condemn every tongue that hath arisen up in judgment against him, and say

in the presence of mén and Angels, "Well done  
"good and faithful servant, enter thou into the  
"joy of thy Lord."

I have dwelt the longer on these scenes nearer our own homes, as to us more particularly interesting, and also, that should these volumes ever engage the attention of our foreign brethren, the true character of personages may be known, who have by their revilers, and an ungodly world, been so grossly misrepresented. Their record is with the Most High ; and in his presence I speak what I have known, and testify what I have seen, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

### SCOTLAND.

I must more concisely pass over the state of the *Scottish Church* ; too much like the English, declined from her own first principles and primitive simplicity. Her ministers exalted in all human science and philosophical attainments above their predecessors ; more polished in style and manners ; deeper in mathematics and metaphysics ; but not more evangelical, more zealous, more laborious. No where have more admired authors won the public approbation ; no where have more dangerous and determined infidels appeared to corrupt the principles of the age ; and the questions which have of late been discussed in the general assembly, awfully demonstrate how great a body preponderates there, against the advocates for the ancient doctrines, and the faith once delivered to the saints.

As the Scottish Church grew by degrees more and more into a worldly sanctuary, the abuses of patronage, and other things, which grieved and disgusted many of her most excellent pastors, produced divisions. These led to the Presbytery of Relief, the Seceders, the Burghers, and Anti-burghers, the shades of whose differences this history cannot particularize. Yet among those much of the power of real godliness remained. An host arose, with the famed Erskines and their fellows at their head, who were zealous advocates for truth as it is in Jesus, and sought to revive the life of religion in their several congregations. Their labours were eminently blessed, and remarkable outpourings of God's spirit have been recorded in many parts of that vineyard. I shun not to use expressions, which may be branded as enthusiastic by modern divines. I believe the Holy Ghost is yet given.

Truth compels me to say, that among these separatists of various denominations, the greatest zeal to promote the evangelical doctrines hath been displayed, though the established Church hath not ceased to furnish many very eminent witnesses for God, not ashamed of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, but daring to be singular, and to bear his reproach. Under their ministry, a numerous and chosen people in the Scottish Kirk, as well as among the dissidents, continue to be reckoned to the Lord for a generation ; and proportional to their numbers, the members of the Kirk are generally better informed, and more evangelical in pro-

fession, than the people of England. But great and awful declensions from gospel purity must be acknowledged and lamented. The increase of wealth and fashionable manners have not improved their moral system; whilst the love of many hath waxed cold amidst the prevailing taste for science and dissipation.

It is however a pleasing trait, and highly deserving mention in a work of this kind, that none have more cordially come forward in the heathen mission than our brethren in Scotland. The same spirit of charity and conciliation among the truly gracious of different denominations, hath softened down the bitterness of asperity, which had too frequently prevailed; and those have agreed to unite in labour and worship, who for a long while had been in a state of utter repulsion from each other: whilst the riches of their liberality have demonstrated how deeply they have the object at heart, of seeking the souls redeemed, in heathen lands, by the blood of the Lamb. Thus hath a body of confessors of evangelical truth, cleaving stedfastly to God, been yet preserved, as exemplary in their lives and labours, as sound in the faith, and able advocates for the ancient reformed doctrines. These, however unfashionable in the eyes of many, continue to be held fast by them as the most sacred deposit and most inestimable treasure. Scotland, in general, hath shared with England, and like Jesurun, hath waxed fat and kicked. Such is human corruption, that the abounding gifts of Providence too often afford occasion of abuse. How

hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven? Yet, when the spiritual Church is the object, North Britain will not be found the least among the thousands of Israel.

A blessed effort has of late been made to revive the spirit of evangelical religion more generally in Scotland, by a Missionary Society instituted for *propagating the Gospel at home*. A number of zealous, well informed men, have gone about preaching every where, and their labours have been attended with the happiest effects. Many have been roused from the torpor of indifference, many called by their ministry out of darkness into marvelous light. This has awakened the enmity and jealousy of the craftsmen; and the *General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* hath issued a *pastoral admonition* against these faithful labourers, which breathes a bitterness and asperity, that cannot fail of carrying its own antidote along with it, and holding up most strikingly to the view of every serious mind, the difference between the revilers and the reviled. Whoever is at the pains to examine facts, and the assertions in this philippic against the promoters of evangelical religion, will find as many falsehoods as lines; so that happily, the more it is read, the more essentially it must serve the cause which it was designed to reprobate. Thus does the Lord bring always good out of evil. The wrath of man shall praise him.

## IRELAND,

Still unhappily sunk in darkness and the superstitions of popery, and little more adorned with real evangelical knowledge in those who have assumed the name of Protestants, hath long afforded matter of much sorrow to such as looked for the life and power of religion. The same zealous advocates for spiritual godliness, above recorded, have passed from England into that kingdom ; and what is called Methodism, hath spread out its branches through many parts of that nation. God has of late also graciously raised up a precious band of the clergy in the established Church, though few indeed in number comparatively, and of small reputation among their fellows, yet are they earnestly endeavouring to revive a spirit of zeal and true Christianity ; to make the name of J  sus more precious, and his authority more respected. Many, I trust, by their labours, will, in the day of God, be written among the righteous ; and when the Lord shall collect his redeemed, be found to have been born there.

It is to be lamented, that ignorance and popery still spread their thick mists over the bulk of the common people : and that the Protestants maintain but little more than their name and mortal hatred to popery, the general profession of their fellow-subjects. Some change must shortly take place. The crisis approaches. May the God of all grace give a prosperous issue !

It is with pleasure I record a happy commencement of missionary labours among them, similar to that in Scotland. In Armagh and the province of Ulster, some faithful ministers, affected with the ignorance and desolations around them, associated for spreading the Gospel, and resolved to endeavour to rouse their fellows to a deeper sense of religious truth. They invited some brethren from England to go over and labour among them, as itinerants in the province of Ulster, and they were heard with the most awakened attention. Multitudes of papists attended their ministry in opposition to all the warnings of their priests, and vast congregations assembled wherever these faithful labourers travelled through the province.

A similar association is formed at Dublin, for the same purpose, hoping to diffuse the knowledge of a Saviour's grace among their benighted countrymen, and to turn their minds from the miserable distractions of politics, to the greater concerns of the salvation of immortal souls. May their efforts be crowned with abundant success !

The other branches of the reformed Church in America, and on the Continent of Europe, claim a few additional remarks, and will bring the whole of this period to its close.

### THE BRITISH COLONIES,

Once so precious a limb of our political body, one with us in language and religion, but now separated from the parent stock, and flourishing un-

der independent sovereignty, deserve a memorial in the history of the true Church. From the beginning, a number of zealous ministers of the cross have maintained the power of godliness in that vast continent ; and in many places singular revivals of the spirit of life have been remarked. Peace, riches, commerce, and increasing prosperity, indeed, had long ago contributed greatly to the introduction of luxury and corruption into the larger cities : and though a remarkable decency of conduct was still generally maintained, the sabbath honoured, and the stage, with its corrupting entertainments, universally prohibited, yet, as many grew more earthly and sensual, profligacy of manners spread and prevailed, and great declensions from the strictness of piety, which formerly distinguished them, were observable. To revive the work, the zealous Methodists, often and many of them crossed the ocean, and preached through all the Continent, as they had done in England, and with the greatest success. Those, who were called by the ministry of Mr. Whitfield, formed congregations of their own, or joined with the Presbyterians and Independents, universally spread over that continent. The Societies of Mr. Wesley were united under him, and more approached the episcopal regimen. Accordingly one of that body, ordained a Bishop by the non-juring Bishops, still subsisting in Scotland, continued that form of discipline : and another, I think, sustains the same office by the appointment, or approbation of Mr. Wesley, at his last trans-atlantic visit. The zeal and activity of the Wesleyan Methodists, is highly



commendable ; and they number more than eighty thousand in Society, blacks as well as whites, besides a vast body of hearers, who are not received into bands and classes, the names given to the smaller private associations, into which, both men and women, separately are distributed. Since the peace, the intercourse has been frequent, and preachers from the general Conference go over, and cement the union between those abroad, in America and the Leeward Islands, and those at home. They are said to be in a very flourishing and increasing state.

But the general interests of religion in America have suffered greatly during the intestine broils. The life of a soldier is very inimical to the progress of godliness, and when men are violently agitated with the politics of this world, their minds are too much taken up to attend to the concerns of a better. In the scramble for wealth, power, and eminence, conscience is often warped by convenience ; and actions admitted, inconsistent with the strict piety of a holy conversation. Since the independence of the nation hath been established, a new race of men hath risen up : deeply engaged to enlarge the commerce, wealth, and importance of their republic, and, like others in such situations, too inattentive to the greater concerns of the world to come. The increase of riches, and unlimited liberty, naturally lead to dissipation in the greater cities, and to the establishment of all those fashionable sources of amusement and entertainment, which had been proscribed by the policy or severity of manners of

the former generations. Play-houses are now opened, and furnished with English performers, and public places of pleasure invite the idle and luxurious to spend their evenings together ; from which it would be too absurd an idea, to suppose they can return at so late an hour to meet their families in prayer and praise ; practices which formerly obtained almost in every house.

Yet, amidst the vast increase of natives, and influx of strangers, many are still found fearing God and working righteousness. Nothing can be more conducive to the best interests of religion, than the perfect and complete toleration of every denomination of Christians, there established as a fundamental law : the state not in the least interfering, nor supporting any dominant profession. As the vast number of Episcopalians, settled in many of the provinces, required a Bishop, the English Bishops consecrated two for America : these, with the Bishop from the non-jurors, continue the succession ; and as they have no courts spiritual, no chapters, no cathedrals, no provision but the voluntary contributions of the faithful, no where, probably, will there be found of the prelatical corps, men more nearly approaching to primitive episcopacy. It only remains that they should be multiplied and itinerate, to become more conformed to the apostolic model, if they possess but the apostolic spirit.

The most animated life of religion will probably be found in America, as in England among the Methodists, or those who share the reproach of the

cross for their zeal and fidelity, and non-conformity to this world. The Moravians have a few precious congregations. The various denominations of Christians have many among them, who have tasted of the grace of God in truth. At New York and Connecticut, the late vigorous efforts to promote a heathen mission, demonstrate that zeal is not extinct among the chief of their ministers and people; and, that though ungodliness and dissipation are come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord is still raising up faithful witnesses, to lift up a standard against them. America may not improbably yet afford a refuge for Europeans, if our miseries increase; and receive into its bosom the faithful, in a day of persecution or desolation, which may yet be coming on the European nations.

The visit of a gracious brother from one of the northern colonies, enables me to add a report, as pleasing as authentic, of the present state of religion in his vicinity; and though Boston, and the more commercial towns, have lost much of the life of godliness, and the purity of Gospel truth, both among ministers and people, there seems to be a large and increasing body in the different provinces, who hold fast the faithful word, and labour to fan the spark of heavenly love and zeal into a brighter flame of genuine Christianity.

No less than one hundred and twenty townships and parishes have experienced a very considerable revival of religion among them, and the progress

seems increasing in the middle and northern parts of Connecticut, in many towns of Massachusetts, in some parts of Vermont, and the north western parts of New York. In a single parish of these, a hundred persons have been added to the number of the communicants in the space of one year : and like promising appearances have arisen in the western counties of Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

The Missionary Society of New York, has made an effort to send a mission to the Chickasaw Indians ; and the Cherokees have communicated their desire of having faithful labourers among them, to teach them the way of salvation.

Thus an uncommon attention to the great concerns of an eternal world, seems lately to have been awakened, within a very short time, through many parts of this great Continent. The too neglected interests of their heathen Indian neighbours, also have been laid on the hearts of many faithful ones, and Societies instituted, and commencing active exertions for spreading the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to the Indians in their vicinity. How vast a field is open for their labours, an eye cast for a moment on the immense interior parts of that vast Continent, will discover. Where the harvest is so plenteous, may the gracious Lord grant that the labourers may not be few ! But as the Americans have so greatly increased their population, and daily extend their settlements farther and wider, may the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ be diffused on every side, and true Chris-

tianity attend the progress of civilization and cultivation through the woods and wilderness of this rising empire.

A summary view of the nations on the Continent, where the reformed religion is professed, must terminate the subject. I shall begin with

### GENEVA,

The cradle of the Reformation, and *the Helvetic body* adjacent. The same causes have there been productive of the same effects. Attachment to the peculiar doctrines of Calvin, Zanchius, and Œcolampadius, has long been greatly weakened by the spread of the Arminian tenets, and by the progress of the new philosophy overturning all religion. The information I receive, misleads me, if through all the Protestant cantons, the greatest decays are not visible. The Lord's day is closed with amusements, beyond the others ; and those, who descend from the pulpits, partake of them with their flocks. Though a decency and sobriety of manners is yet preserved, the power of evangelical religion is little demonstrated in the ministers, or the people. The arch-infidel Rousseau, with all the strange oddities of the man, by his pleasing style and manner, spread his destructive opinions ; and Voltaire, the more crafty and jealous rival of his fame, diffused in all his vicinity, and especially at Geneva, the poison of his scepticism, to which his scenic representations contributed not a little, by attracting the lovers of pleasure, more than lovers

of God. To him all flocked, who dwelt in the vicinage, and imbibed his abominations ; and all who passed that way, from every quarter, were proud to be introduced to the high priest of *infidelity*, to admire his wit, adopt his ridicule, and be initiated into the mysteries of *incredulity*. Hence, I doubt, if there remains a single professor, or pastor at Geneva, who adheres to Calvin, either in principle or practice ; but the lowest form of moral essay, and Socinian Christianity, prevails. The convulsions, under the name of liberty, have tended greatly to increase the general apostacy, and they are nearly become French in *irreligion*, as in politics.

Throughout *Switzerland* the same spirit is too prevalent, though not without some happy exceptions from the prevailing infidelity. Basil still maintains a precious body of ministers, and others, associated to maintain and diffuse the principles and practice of the true evangelical religion. Their correspondence with the Missionary Society at London, speaks them men of the same heart and mind ; and their exertions to diffuse the knowledge of a crucified Jesus in their vicinity, manifests the spirit of primitive love and zeal that animates them. May their numbers increase, and their labours be more abundantly blessed to the diffusion of light and truth on every side ! The fraternization with France, whose armies have over-run the country, and destroyed their constitution, augurs no good to Helvetic liberty and prosperity, any more than to religion. We must wait,

however, till the tornado is passed, to see whether its final effects will be destructive or salutary.

## FRANCE,

Once distinguished for the purity of the reformed faith, and then, as we have seen, reduced to the greatest extremities, by the bigot persecutor Lewis, continues sunk very low in every religious view. I have mentioned before its declensions, and the cause of them ; nor do I hear of any revivals, now that every link of the chain of popery is broken, and every man's bonds loosed. I am rather induced to think, the Protestants themselves have drank as deeply as any others into the infidel philosophy : and, as long ago, they had greatly declined from the purity of doctrine, and the spirituality of religion, the late revolutions have produced no beneficial change ; retaining only their mortal hatred of popery, that is now gratified to the uttermost, and none more cordially help forward the desolation of every ecclesiastic and monastic institution, than the Protestants : but of any zeal in faithful labourers, or of living Christianity among the Protestant professors, I can find little evidence. A few, indeed, sigh over the abominations, and in the south of France a cry is heard for the pure word of God ; but the labourers are not found, or compelled to conceal themselves. Every where else, amidst the tumults, conflicts, and agitations prevalent, which have engrossed the attention, and seized upon the passions of mankind, little concern remains about any religion at all. The zeal of Methodism made

some feeble efforts to enter into Normandy and Brittany, whilst the communication was open ; but every thing has been in a state so convulsed, and every foreigner liable to such suspicion, that, I apprehend, nothing can yet be done or hoped, till some settlement of the nation, with toleration, shall embolden the zealous to attempt, once more, communicating to them the blessings of the everlasting Gospel.

### HOLLAND.

*THE United Provinces* have constantly maintained the reformed faith as the national profession ; and with a great similitude to our own, adopt formulas, not really believed ; and profess to receive the decisions of the synod of Dort, whilst in general, I fear, the ministers exhibit more the traits of Episcopius, and our own latitudinarian divines. The love of gold has generally prevailed over the love of godliness in the multitude ; and the philosophic pride of reasoning hath sent forth from their universities, teachers too wise to submit implicitly to the reformed opinions of Calvin, or the creed of Athanasius. Less dissipated, indeed, yet more intent on gain, till the late desolations came upon them, religion in its vital power was too little known ; a few good men still remained, who preached and taught Jesus Christ. A small body of Moravians, and a larger band of Mennonites, maintained a stricter attention to the worship and service of God ; but in general an icy coldness of devotion, and dull formality, discharged the public



weekly services at Church : and little family religion, or associations for prayer or praise, were any where found, French influence, French manners, French Government, now afford little prospect of amelioration : unless it be from the hope, that when matters come to the worst, they may mend. The profession of the nation, indeed, remains unchanged ; yet one step has been taken to abolish that, by withdrawing, it is said, the stipends from the ministers of the national establishment. True religion can well subsist without an establishment ; but when the power of godliness is lost, the form of it will quickly follow, when no longer supported by the state. The priest, whom men maintain to pray, will hardly continue his function when his salary ceases.

One happy trait of the revival of the spirit of godliness among them, hath of late appeared. Dr. Vanderkemp, a Dutch missionary, gone with others to the Caffre country, from the London Missionary Society, having first visited Holland to settle his affairs, dispersed an address to that body, which produced the happiest effects. A considerable number immediately associated for the same missionary purposes at Rotterdam, and continue to pursue with zeal this blessed object.

Another similar Society has been recently formed at Aurich, in East Friesland ; and as they are men of a like spirit with their missionary brethren, we cannot but hope that the most blessed effects will ensue, and faithful men be raised up in the spirit of

primitive Evangelists, to spread the true Gospel of the grace of God, abroad and at home.

The present tempestuous moment, will, it may be hoped, be succeeded by some happy amelioration ; and the inhabitants, from the scourge they have suffered, learn righteousness, and return to Him, from whom they have so greatly departed. If such be the event of all their sufferings, the issue will be peace.

### GERMANY.

THIS pillar of the reformation, and primary beacon of divine light and truth, is grievously defaced, and darkness hath again covered the earth. The Calvinists as well as Lutherans, have too generally imbibed the principles of the infidel philosophy. Excluding the government of the allwise and righteous Jehovah, they have placed blind fate upon the throne, and substituted the doctrine of *necessity*, for God's predestination and grace. Scepticism leading to atheism, naturally brings up the train of these depths of Satan. The wise above what is written, pride themselves in the acuteness and freedom of their researches, and those who are trained up for the ministry in the universities and seminaries of learning, unless my information misleads me, are early initiated in these anti-christian principles, and commence their career with the purpose of debasing the faith which they are obliged to engage solemnly to maintain ; whilst he that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey. And should any man appear zealous for truth, and ex-

hibit traits of holy walking with God, he would infallibly bring on himself a stigma of peculiarity, and render himself alike obnoxious to his teachers and fellow students. Thus educated, and thus ministering, it cannot be expected but that the consequences should follow, which are too evident. And even where more daring blasphemy against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity does not lift up its banner, a state of lifeless torpor and indifference prevails. The forms of religion are hastily and profunctorily discharged, whilst a life of worldly conformity, or scientific pursuits, leaves scarce a trace visible of the mind of Christ, and of a conversation in Heaven.

Among all the states and free cities professing the reformed faith, I can procure no information of any remarkable revivals of evangelical truth and spirituality of religion. I cannot however doubt, but that, in many places of that vast country, there are found men of a true heart holding fast the head Christ, who search the Scriptures daily, and, as their confessions and forms of worship are conformable to its dictates, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, whose cross they bear, by a zeal for the truth as it is in him, and by a conduct formed on the bright model of his own great example. But among ministers and people these happy exceptions are too few, whilst the general body is carried down with the torrent of infidelity and dissipation, worldly pursuits, or science falsely so called.

That God hath not left himself without witnesses, may be concluded from some evangelical asso-

ciations lately formed, with a view of reviving the work of the Lord in these present evil days : the spirit which breathes in their correspondences, witnesses that the vital spark of genuine Christianity still glows in the bosom of a few, who are waiting for the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and crying to him as his elect, day and night, that he would hasten his work, and kindle such a flame of love and zeal, as all of the waters of opposition cannot quench, nor all the floods of false philosophy be able to extinguish.

From the whole of this view of the REFORMED CHURCH, we may perceive every where, throughout its extent, a chosen generation, a peculiar people, often indeed thinly dispersed, and in some countries apparently declining ; in others exhibiting stronger symptoms of vitality, and striving against the evil around them, with some happy success ; and with an increasing number of faithful labourers. Nor in any comparative view of the days which are past, can the present be counted inauspicious. I am rather disposed to think and hope, that the end of the eighteenth century hath produced as plenteous a harvest in the Gospel field as any of the seasons of revival since the time of the reformation.

In no æra have the doctrines of the Gospel been more clearly opened, and by a greater variety of able and faithful men, and probably at no time since the days of the Apostles, shall we be able to produce a greater number of Christians, who could

give a sounder and more explicit reason of the hope that is in them, derived from views more purely evangelical ; and who walk more closely with God, in righteousness and true holiness

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### CONCLUSION.

**I**N following the Church of Christ through the wilderness of this world, we have beheld scenes highly glorious, and deeply afflictive : the mighty power of the great Head of the Church, preserving it through the fires, and the constant opposition of the god of this world, to disturb its peace, and sully its purity. In all ages, the same corrupt nature of man hath been seen producing the same effects, in the exercise of proud reasoning, worldly pursuits and sensual enjoyments ; and the influence of divine grace hath appeared in casting down these imaginations, and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ ; in weaning the affections from this world, and fixing them by realizing views of faith, on a better. Thus two sorts of persons figure on the scene, and only two ; the children of God, and the children of the wicked one : the latter always the many, the mighty and the wise, the former the few, the poor and the despised of this world ; comparatively inferior in all that men esteem, and only great in the sight of God. How in the unequal struggle, a body of such evident inferiority hath been preserved, is among the manifest evidences of his care, and the fulfilment

of his promises, who hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

The first age exhibited the blaze of gospel light in all its purity and vigour, and the triumphs of the cross over the power, craft and malice of men. But clouds soon obscured the face of day; and though many were purified through the fires of martyrdom, and the body of the Church was seen extending her wide arms to embrace the then known world, yet the enemy began to sow his tares among the wheat, and they sprung up so vigorously as threatened to choke the good seed. The profession growing general, and the power of godliness declining, no sooner had Christianity gained an establishment, than we see the Church sinking into a worldly sanctuary; and ambition, pride and avarice seated in the high places, and claiming unhallowed dominion over the consciences of men. For more than ten centuries, things continued to go from evil to worse, till all religion at last seemed lost and buried, in name and form, in superstition and tyranny. A few indeed in every age, reduced very low; sometimes apparently to two or three witnesses, continued prophesying in sackcloth, to a world lying in wickedness. But God remembered mercy. His promises must be fulfilled in their season. A day of revival broke; the light diffused itself on every side, a beam of it hath passed unto the ends of the earth. However sad our declensions have since been, God hath never forsaken his Church and people. Times of

refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord. In our own land, remarkable interpositions of his arm made bare, have appeared ; and greatly as our faith is often discouraged by the lukewarmness of the friends of truth, and the might and multitude of its enemies, yet how much more reason have we to hope, and how much more encouragement for exertion, than in the first days of reformation ? It appears much more practicable now to preach the gospel among all nations, than at that day to evangelize the smallest district. Great and manifold indeed are the discouragements yet in the way ; fear and unbelief magnify the difficulties ; and too many despairing of the event, discourage their brethren, and weaken their hands ; but surely if God will work, then none can let it. Instruments will not be wanting for the greatest and most extensive exertions, when he in his providence opens the door of entrance, and by his spirit shall rouse up the zeal of very many, to say here am I, send me. We have seen strange things in our day, which could hardly have been imagined, even a few years ago ; and who can tell, but that we may see greater things than these, when the adorable Lord shall take to himself his great power and reign ; when all the ends of the earth shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God. Such events the prophecies bid us expect ; such the promises embolden us to hope, will *shortly* come to pass. It is not by lying down in despondence, but by rising up with resolute determination to be found active in the cause of God and

truth, that the work will be done. Let every faithful individual but solemnly and seriously enquire, what can *I* do ? Resolving to spare no labour ; to decline no hardship ; to omit no proper means ; but sacredly to devote his person, substance, influence, abilities, to advance the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and it is impossible to say, what an amazing progress may be made in the course of a very few years. Whenever such a spirit, poured out from on high, shall animate the bosom of the real followers of the Lamb, then shall we see him coming with power and great glory. All obstacles will be laid low ; all difficulties surmounted ; and the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, collected from the four corners of the earth, shall compose one fold under one Shepherd.

If any thing written in these pages shall stir up the heart of but one man to pray more fervently for this blessed advent—if it fire one tongue to speak more boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus—if it shall have removed the least of our unhallowed prejudices against each other—or tended to conciliate the faithful few, whom education or bigotted asperity had disunited—if it shall help to concentrate our efforts more vigorously in the one great object, and to hasten the desirable event—then shall I not regret the labour of this research, and shall hope that I have not lived or written in vain.



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## *APPENDIX.*

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## APPENDIX.

### CONCISE VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF EVANGELICAL RELIGION.

**T**HESE Volumes of Ecclesiastical History, submitted to the judgment of the public, have been drawn up amidst the astonishing changes which have of late convulsed the great republics of Christendom, and the issue of the conflict we still wait in awful suspense. The Great Lord of the universe, however afflictive the dispensations of his providence may appear, will ultimately over-rule every event for his own glory, and the accomplishing his prophecies and promises respecting his Church and people. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion that which shall not be destroyed. The desolations which are wrought will ultimately cast down the barriers which have been erected against evangelical religion ; and whatever be the event politically, truth and godliness shall finally prevail, till the earth be covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

In full confidence that the counsel of the Lord shall assuredly be fulfilled in his own appointed time, we may with some pleasing prospects of its near approach, contemplate the present state of the Christian world ; and the review will give strong reason to believe, amidst all the just complainings of the spread of infidelity and licentiousness, that the former days were at no time, probably since the first spread of Christianity, better than these ; and that, humanly speaking, in no age the facilities were so great, and the means apparently so efficaciously provided, for spreading the knowledge of salvation to the ends of the earth. It is impossible not to deplore the evils which abound, yet ought we not the less to rejoice in the glorious diffusion of Gospel grace, and the evidently increasing circle of true Christianity abroad and at home. Nor can we but indulge the pleasing hope, that the same ability to spread the doctrines of truth, and the spirit of zeal which hath lately arisen to make the attempt, will gain force as it proceeds ; and that whenever peace shall again return to bless the earth, the restored communication among the nations, shall mightily tend to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in Christendom, as well as facilitate a door of entrance and utterance among the heathen, who have not yet heard his fame, or seen his glory.

In the mean time, it may be encouraging as well as instructive, to cast a glance over the nations professing Christianity, to consider their present situation with respect to the great object sought

out in the History here detailed, *the true spiritual Church of Christ*, and to be confirmed in the conviction, that it hath increased, is increasing, and shall increase, till the Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising.

In this concise review, I shall begin with the North of Europe, and proceed to the South, turn to America and the Indies, and pass to New Holland and the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, that wait for his law, pointing out every hopeful symptom that leads to usher in the days of the Son of Man.

### RUSSIA.

WE have considered the state of this vast empire, hardly yet emerging from barbarism in many of the provinces, and little advanced in evangelical knowledge or practice ; yet may it justly be regarded as a favourable circumstance, that a growing intercourse formed with the more polished nations of Europe, naturally leads to a higher state of civilization, and to a happier cultivation of literature. And as the most intimate connections of Russia are with those Protestant nations in which the power of godliness most prevails, it cannot but afford many and great opportunities for the admission of real truth and godliness among them ; especially as the policy of the government holds out encouragement to the settlement of foreigners, and indulges all Protestants with free toleration. This has already produced some happy effects in the little colony of Germans on the Wolga ; the faith-

ful who have arisen in Lithuania ; and probably a few at least dispersed through the empire, who, having the book of truth, and liberty to consult its contents, are more than nominal believers. It is a great advantage, that Christianity is the general profession, that the orthodox creeds are professedly the national belief, and however low the present state of spiritual religion may be among them, some sparks have appeared, and a door of hope is open for the admission of farther light and truth, whenever it shall please the Lord to arise, and have mercy on that part of his Zion.

### SWEDEN,

LUTHERAN in profession, enjoying the free use of the word of God, holding the Augsburg Confession, and filled with ministers of the Christian sanctuary, affords symptoms of real religion, and prospects of greater revival. The correspondences between us and them, of late breathe a cordial good will to the cause of God and truth, afford information of new efforts making to spread the knowledge of evangelical doctrines among the poor of the flock ; and, in the very lamentations they contain of the spread of infidel principles, and the too great indifference to all spiritual religion, it is manifest there is a body yet remaining, who sigh for all the abominations that are committed to the dishonour of the Christian name, and whose voice is yet heard, preaching and teaching Jesus Christ, however unfashionable such fervor may appear, and such truth be regarded. If active

zeal, and the power of godliness, be at a low ebb, there is still vitality in the body, and only waits the coming of the spirit of the Lord on the appointed Sampsons, who shall cast down the temples of Dagon.

### DENMARK AND NORWAY,

ARE in a state similar to their neighbours ; of the same religion and profession, sharing, I fear, equally in their declensions and infidelity, but retaining in their established Church the true principles, and not destitute of faithful witnesses, who preach and teach Jesus Christ, know the power of his resurrection, and seek to make him known to others. Their missions to Greenland and the Coast of Malabar, speak an attention to the Christian doctrine : and whatever cause for complaint there may be of want of zeal and enlargement in these objects, yet, so far as they have gone, there is a blessing, and nothing hinders, whenever the Lord shall waken their ministers to more vigorous exertions, but that they may enter in both the Indies, and lift up the banner of the cross.

### GERMANY.

THIS vast country, divided into different principalities, the cradle of reformation, in so many places affording strong symptoms of awakened zeal for the cause of Christ ; and from whence the good Moravians have gone forth to spread eminently the Gospel among the heathen, may be justly ex-

pected to have their youth renewed as the eagle's. In the north, chiefly Protestant, much true religion is yet to be found. The annual meeting of many zealous Lutheran ministers in Lusatia, proves, that a living body of faithful witnesses still subsists. From Berlin, Lusatia, Saxony, &c. correspondences of the most pleasing nature assure, that there is a generation to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Efforts are made to send forth men of faith and truth, to address the poor, and spread religious tracts, and the labours are blest. It must be acknowledged, that at Berlin, and all the courts of Germany, the fashionable philosophy has made a rapid progress, and those who had confessedly no part in the kingdom of God in their hearts, were ready to take refuge in infidelity, and to treat the religion of Jesus with contempt ; but it hath survived their Pagan predecessors, and it will live and flourish when all its revilers shall fade as the leaf. Many continue to lift up a standard against the overflowings of ungodliness. Of late, a spirit of zeal and life seems awakened in divers places, and it is hoped the number of faithful witnesses increases. The door is open, and however there may be, many adversaries, they have apparently much less difficulties to encounter, than Luther, Carlostadt, and others, met and overcame. We have assured evidence, that many faithful labourers there cultivate the Lord's vineyard. The cordial approbation expressed, and the affectionate regard testified towards those in England, who have lately turned their attention to the poor heathen, demonstrate that the love of the truth still



lies deep at their hearts. May their own labours tend more abundantly to diffuse it on every side !

### POLAND,

NOW no more a separate kingdom, has certainly, by its partition, lost nothing on the side of evangelical religion, and at least gained greater facilities for its admission, whenever the Lord shall pour out his spirit, raise up instruments, and send them forth to labour in that barren land. Those under Russian and Prussian dominion, will probably meet no obstacle from government in the introduction of the true Gospel. If good subjects, it will be permitted to them to choose their own religious profession. That spiritual matters are at a very low ebb, is much to be feared, where Romanism has so long predominated, and Socinian Christianity held for a while its strong holds : but the darkest moment precedes the dawn. • Arise Lord, and plead thine own cause !

### UNITED PROVINCES.

OF all the nations of the Continent of the Reformed religion, in these provinces its most living power seems to have been preserved. We have seen their history, and in this moment of political crisis, have the pleasing evidence, that whatever their future destination may be, under whatever government subsisting, the spirit of life and truth still burns among them with an unextinguished ardor. Greatly as they may have suffered by the prece-

ding declensions, or more lately from French fraternity, we know there is a precious seed preserved in the midst of them, both ministers and people, who are counted to the Lord for a generation. The convulsions they have undergone, and the sufferings they have endured, have purified many in the fires. They have felt the Lord's controversy with them, and have awakened from the torpor of indifference. A spirit of zeal and activity is excited. At Rotterdam many have united for the purpose of extending the Gospel among the heathen. In Friesland a considerable number of ministers have associated for the same blessed end. Some happy symptoms of a deeper concern about eternal things has appeared in different places, and these awakenings speak present mercy, and augur future blessings. A preparation is begun, whenever happy days of peace shall return, for arising to the help of the Lord ; and with their renovated commerce, none are likely to possess greater opportunities of spreading the Gospel among the heathen, than our Batavian brethren.

### SWITZERLAND.

PASSING up the Rhine to its source, we know at Franckfort and Neuwied, and probably at other places, that there is a faithful people, witnessing to the power of the Gospel, extending their desires to the heathen, and looking for the spread of saving truth into all lands. We have assured evidence, that the Swiss Cantons, however declined

in religion, or ravaged by invaders, are not destitute of the living power of godliness, and many are associated for the revival of true Christianity. At Basil and Zurich are found men in whom is the spirit of the living God, who are united to spread his glorious Gospel around them, and are zealously disposed to forward missionary efforts among the heathen. Such a marked evidence of active exertions manifests the remaining power of divine grace in the midst of them ; and, that from them shall the word of God again sound forth, and that they shall be made blessed and happy instruments in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel.

### FRANCE.

IN the present convulsed and turbid state of that great nation, where all religion seems for a while to be overturned, it is difficult to say what true religion is yet hidden among them, and what may be hoped, when quiet of any kind, and a settled government, shall succeed to the the state of war and ravage, under which all the provinces groan. Many Protestants are found holding fast the faithful word. We know that in Languedoc an earnest desire has been expressed to send among them ministers, who should preach the pure Gospel of Christ. We have evidence that some such are labouring with zeal in Alsace, in connection with the Society at Basil : and it can hardly be doubted, that in other places, however the spirit of Protestant zeal may have declined, that the Lord hath not left himself without witnesses. When the day shall

come, that friendly intercourse between contending nations shall be restored, the number of these will probably be found more than we expected, and the very miseries of the kingdom to have contributed to call men's minds to a deeper consideration of eternal things. Though I can look only to those of the reformed religion for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and believe it is from them it must arise, I mean not to suggest that real spiritual men may not be found among the French Catholics, who have not renounced the Lord Jesus Christ, though they may have been restrained from more open confession of him in those days of rebuke and blasphemy ; and this good, I trust, shall arise out of all the evils which preceded, that men's minds will be more prepared for the Gospel word, and greater liberty in religious matters be admitted, whatever party may finally prevail, than was before. The very kindness shewn to their exiles, will teach at least a more tolerant spirit. If the barriers of bigotry are broken down, and some of the stumbling blocks removed out of the way, divine truth will find easier access ; and, whenever the Lord shall speak the word, great will be the company of the preachers. Why may not this people, after all its convulsions, become a praise in the earth ?

From this review therefore of the *Protestant* cause on the continent, there appears in all the lands a precious seed counted to the Lord for a generation, and a body ready for active service, though small,

and of no reputation, yet among the weak things of God that are stronger than men.

In all *the Catholic countries*, a state of great debility has been apparent, and the vials of wrath have been particularly poured out on the throne of the beast. The ecclesiastics, the convents, and all the wealth and magnificence attached to them, have been in an especial manner the objects of destruction ; and are so fallen, as probably never to rise up again to their former weight and importance. The prevalence of impiety and infidelity, however greatly to be deplored, has cast contempt upon the dogmas of popery, and loosened every man's bonds from that servitude of opinion, in which they had been so long held. To read and think is a liberty now generally taken ; and however the best things are abused, the benefits, with all the abuses, greatly preponderate. Persecution, on account of opinions, will, henceforth, be supported with more difficulty, and its savageness at least controlled. A sense of interest, as well as the dictates of humanity, prescribes greater indulgence to men of different sentiments, whilst they are useful, peaceable, and industrious subjects. Even the lawlessness, libertinism, and universal rage for pleasure, however criminal, offer no such barriers to divine truth, and the convictions of conscience, as the false religion, superstitious practices, and commutations of popery. The idea of pardon being to be purchased in this life, and the torments of the next bought off, were much more fatal opiates to the conscience, than all the suggestions of infidelity. The latter

left the heart more open to the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God ; and the former steeled men against all conviction, and lulled the conscience asleep in a pretended religious hope, and there was no hope. Thus, all the circumstances considered, in all the lands of popery, the obstructions are certainly diminished, and the way of access easier for the admission of evangelical truth, and a silent preparation made for the way of the Lord. I have no doubt that a few years will see the pure Gospel preached in France, and even in that bigotted country, the Netherlands. Italy, rescued by the warriors of the Greek and Protestant professions, in a great measure, can hardly forbid toleration to the religion of their defenders ; and Spain and Portugal, though last, yet in the end shall be enlightened with the beams of Gospel grace. In the consideration therefore of all circumstances on the continent, I cannot but infer, the great declension of the popish power, the more abundant facility for the admission of religious enquiry, and the probability, that as the arms of persecution are weakened, the exertions of the faithful will be increased, and a part of the pressure being taken off the spring, its elasticity will overcome the remaining resistance. I look forward to the approaching century with hope, for great increase of the *one true Church* of the redeemed, whose names are written in heaven.

## THE BRITISH ISLES.

BRITAIN seems preserved in a peculiar manner for the purposes of God's glory in the revival of religion in the earth. Providentially favored with an extension of commerce, such as no nation ever before possessed : enabled by her resources to stop the ravages of the Gallic torrent, which threatened to sweep the earth with desolation ; and in her bosom containing a body of such faithful people, as perhaps no other kingdom on earth can produce. The amazing increase of Gospel truth among ourselves, the spirit of activity which hath been of late exerted to make known the glory, and to erect the kingdom of our Immanuel in the hearts of men—the many, and increasing associations to diffuse the knowledge of Christ Jesus, wherever our wooden bulwarks float on the ocean—the vast number of faithful witnesses rising up at home—and the readiness of a multitude to devote themselves to the service of the heathen in all lands—All these things speak an æra highly auspicious to the progress of evangelical religion, and the more extensive spread of true Christianity, than our times had before seen or hoped for, or any of the ages that are past presented to our view. It is indeed yet but the morning spread upon the mountains ; but if God will work, it shall shine more and more unto the perfect day. Deploing, as we justly may, the wide spreading ravages of infidel opinions, the eager pursuit of dissipation which abounding wealth affords, the earthly tempers engendered and nourished by great and commercial

engagements ; and the irreligion of the many, the wise, the mighty, and the noble ; yet is there found in the midst of us, a great and active body, who have the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ supremely at heart ; and are willing to spend and be spent in this blessed work. Nor at any time since the Reformation hath there been found a more diffused knowledge of the truths of the Gospel, and a more apparent disposition to extend the communication of them to the ends of the earth.

It is a favourable feature in the comparison of our condition with other nations, that in our seminaries of learning, open infidelity meets no encouragement. Our universities profess orthodoxy ; and however they have shared in the general taint, and been degraded in the scale of Christian graces, there is still found in the midst of them a precious seed, and increasing, of those who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. And though too many come forth who have drank of the bitter waters, and go out to seek their places in the worldly sanctuary of the Church, eager to secure its preferments, and little careful of the souls committed to their charge ; yet some are found men of a different stamp, who have not so learned Christ, but have been taught by the great Interpreter the things which be of the spirit of God, and faithfully preach and teach Jesus Christ. It is also a singular token for good, that several highly promising seminaries are erected entirely with a view to maintain the purity of Gospel truth, into which none are intentionally admitted, nor from which



any are sent out, but such as give reasonable ground of confidence, that they have themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious, and expect no higher honour or reward, than to be able to testify to others how gracious that Lord is, and how blessed are they who know, love, serve and enjoy him. About two thousand such we have in the midst of us already labouring, and heard by about six hundred thousand auditors with serious attention : and whilst the number of the faithful preachers is continually increasing, the Lord is pleased to add unto his Church daily of such as shall be saved. It is a pleasing fact, which in my researches has come under my own knowledge, and should stimulate to growing activity in the work of God, that the labours of an individual have been blest so extensively, as to have called about forty persons to the knowledge of the truth under his ministry, who are now preaching the Gospel, or have finished their course with joy. A land where God has been pleased so evidently to manifest his power and grace, is, I trust, reserved, not only to be a praise in the earth, but the chosen instrument in the hand of Providence to promote the coming of his kingdom and glory throughout all nations, till the expected end shall come.

## AMERICA,

CONTAINS still in its bosom the precious seeds destined to bring forth fruit unto life eternal through that vast continent. The struggles for liberty have

not proved the most friendly to the progress of religion, yet the growing population, and the increasing importance of the United States, afford strong arguments to expect a great diffusion of Gospel knowledge. The spread of new settlers farther and farther among the Indian nations—the perfect freedom and toleration every where established—the number of faithful and zealous men, who hold fast the faithful word—the number of Methodist Societies every where formed—the establishments of the Moravian brethren—the Societies lately formed in New York, and Connecticut, for the purposes of sending the Gospel to their heathen neighbours, and evangelising the Indian tribes—the expulsion of the French from Canada—and the feebleness of the Spaniards to the south—above all the great revival of religion in many parts of the United States before recorded, all conspire to open a door for greater diffusion of truth, and embolden us to expect faithful missionaries, who shall arise to carry the knowledge of salvation from the banks of the Mississippi, through the yet unexplored regions that lead to the Pacific Ocean. I have before me an account of efforts made and making to traverse this vast expanse, and to form a communication with the western coasts so lately surveyed by Capt. Vancouver and Capt. Broughton. Mr. Mackenzie, from Montreal, has reached the sea coast not far from Nootka Sound, and returned. But if commercial purposes can lead men to such attempts, surely the souls of men are a greater object, and demand more mighty efforts to seek and save them. Every day the practicability

of enlarging the circle is more apparent, and whilst the means of new settlements in these unknown regions multiply, a strong disposition appears to carry the Gospel, as well as the commerce and arts of Europe, to the numbers of savage nations which occupy this vast territory.

## THE ISLES OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN OCEAN,

ARE yet more accessible, and have engaged particular attention, and though difficulties and disappointments retard the progress of those men of God, who are engaged in this highly laudable attempt to carry the everlasting Gospel to these populous and fruitful Islands, yet such a commencement hath been made, such a fund provided, such evidence obtained of the practicability of the attempt, and such facilities for the execution of it, that it can hardly be doubted but that in a very few years that hemisphere will turn to the sun of righteousness, and enjoy the brightness of his shining. Peculiarly favourable circumstances will engage attention to these countries. The fertility of the soil—the beauty and healthiness of the climate—the uncivilized state of the natives, which gives Europeans so great an advantage over them—the facility wherewith settlements may be formed—and the easiness with which they can be maintained—besides the probability, that the spirit of commerce and adventure will make some essay to secure the first advantages, and forward civilization, if the Gospel which we have sent them should

not by its own divine power produce all the happy effects upon the natives, which we hope and expect to hear.

## ASIA,

TEEMING with an immense population, offers, through the settlements of the Europeans, a door of hope for the entrance of the everlasting Gospel. In Bengal a noble attempt has been made by the Baptists, which though yet a day of small things, we hope shall have great increase ; it affords one proof more, that when zeal is awake there is no such lion in the streets as should affright with his roaring. Other attempts, though feeble, are making to send the light of truth into that benighted region, where, though the thousands of Europeans have settled for the object of gain, few have thought those of godliness worth pursuing, and in all that can be called religion, the difference between a Christian, a Mahomedan, and a Gentoo, is but the name. On the Malabar coast, a few, and but a few, labour as a kind of forlorn hope, under the patronage of the great Society in London for propogating the Gospel : their numbers thinned by death, and not replenished by men of equal spirit with the departed, the mission languishes, and calls for more vigour in the pursuit of the object and greater care in the selection of the missionaries. A new society of the episcopal clergy, lately formed, will, it is to be hoped, take these desolate regions into their care, and turn their attention to these countries where Bramha and Ma-

homed yet reign uncontrolled ; and where all the vast and populous countries, from the Thracian Bosphorus to Japan, are almost destitute of every spark of Christianity, and lying in the darkness of spiritual death : Oh, that they might awake to newness of life !

## AFRICA,

DARK as her sooty inhabitants, and overwhelmed with heathen ignorance, or the Mahomedan delusion, waits for the sun of righteousness. A gleam has darted on her coasts, at Sierra Leone, and the Cape of Good Hope, the harbinger of a blessed day. At present, however, few, very few, are found laborers in this uncultivated vineyard. The report from Sierra Leone affords no sanguine expectation from that quarter. The labours of the good Moravians at the Cape present a more hopeful appearance. The attempt of Dr. Vanderkemp and his associates has begun with the most promising appearances, and if the increase be answerable to the commencement, the harvest will be plenteous. The account which has been given under the head of missions, cannot but awaken the cries of the faithful for more laborers in this vineyard, and to expect from this providential opening, that Ethiopia and Saba will soon stretch out their hands unto God.

From the whole of this review, it cannot but strike the attentive observer, how very circumscribed is the extent of the Church of the living God, and how immense the nations still destitute of the

light of life, who are notwithstanding given to Christ for his inheritance, and who shall come forth from darkness, and shew themselves at the divine call, when he shall come to claim the throne, whose right it is, and to "overturn, overturn, overturn," all the enemies, who shall rise up against him. Fully expecting the accomplishment of what God hath spoken, the preceding history has opened what hath been done, what is doing, and what may be hoped. If we merely reasoned on the difficulties, and the power we possess, our hearts might well faint, and our hands be feeble ; but if we believe the great and precious promises, all things are possible to him that believeth. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of God's word of prophecy and promise shall never pass away until the whole is fulfilled. The things impossible for men are possible to God.

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## DISSERTATIONS.



I. ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFORMITY IN  
RELIGION, IN REPLY TO THE REV. MR. MILNER, IN  
HIS SECOND VOLUME OF CHURCH HISTORY.

II. ON SCHISM.

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[*WHEN the following sheets were written, the re-  
verend and learned Author of Ecclesiastical History,  
Mr. Milner, lived, adorning his profession by his ex-  
ample, and improving his generation by his labours.  
The great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls hath removed  
him to his reward. I had hoped from him friendly  
rebuke where I may have erred, or candid acquiescence  
in the force of truth, where it appeared. We both  
meant, I am confident, in simplicity and godly sincerity  
to follow the best convictions of the word of revelation,  
and in all our deductions from it, to reason according  
to the analogy of the first great admitted principles.  
Some other able brother will now perform that office ;  
and as Divine truth is alone the object, acknowledg-  
ment of mistake shall instantly follow the conviction of  
error. Errare possum hereticus esse nolo.*]



## DISSERTATION I.



*On the Establishment of Uniformity in Religion,  
in reply to the Rev. Mr. Milner, in his Second  
Volume of Church History.*

**T**HEODOSIUS, supreme in all causes ecclesiastical as civil, resolved to reduce his Christian subjects to uniformity with his own opinions, which he presumed to be those of the Scriptures. Instead of union in the one head Christ, held in mutual charity and forbearance, he determined to cut and square religion according to his own model ; and by penal laws, to compel submission to the establishment which he formed. Mr. Milner undertakes to defend the propriety of this conduct. I am sorry to differ from a man I revere, and with whom I am generally one in sentiment and heart. I wish the tide of popular opinion may be against him, as he supposes. I fear bigotry is yet too prevalent. His arguments for such establishment I will endeavour in love and in the spirit of meekness, to answer. The subject is equally important in every age. *Such* establishments appear to me fraught with opposition to the *true Church*, which he professes to espouse.

What he takes for granted in the first sentence, I can by no means admit, that “because the Gospel is of divine authority, and ought to be received, that every rejection of its doctrines is as just a cause for condemnation, and human penalties, as murder or theft.” The offences against society are of a very different kind, and amenable to a different tribunal from those of infidelity. Murder, and the disbelief of the proper divinity of Jesus, rank in a very different line. I admit, that in the day of God, they equally will be punished with eternal death : but I deny any shadow of Scripture authority, for investing the civil magistrate with power to punish the one, as they punish the other. His argument, therefore, in the first instance, appears utterly inconclusive.

P. 226. The *expedience and utility* are equally disputable, as *the right*, to inflict *pains and penalties*, for non-conformity to a national establishment. Can it be proved to be right, expedient, or useful, to establish Episcopacy in England, Presbytery in Scotland, and Popery in Canada ? and these under the same state, and to punish with pains and penalties those who differ from either ? Is the temporal good of the subjects really consulted by such establishments ? Might they not with much greater propriety be permitted to choose what form of Church government they like ? And if they were good and faithful subjects, would not the preservation and well being of the society be thus equally consulted ?

Mr. Milner's three arguments, p. 227, will, contrary to his supposition, receive, I hope, a satisfactory answer.

Respecting *the clear evidences of Christianity*, should I admit, what may be disputed, that the evidences of Christianity are perfectly *clear*, and the doctrines as *important* as can be suggested. If a person object, and say, they are *not clear* to me? Is he, therefore, whilst professing to submit to the civil laws of that society to which he belongs, punishable because he does not admit the evidences of Christianity as *clear*? "The doctrines are *important*;" allowed: but, are they all of equal importance? Which are to be fixed on as *fundamentals*? Who has the authority to determine these? or to measure the supposed *wickedness of heart* of those, who shall reject what others, perhaps the majority, decide to be fundamental? Is not Mr. Milner aware, that the saving knowledge of these fundamentals can only be received from the Spirit of God? and if I have not obtained this unspeakable gift, has the magistrate a right to condemn me, either for my ignorance or my obstinacy?

Does Mr. Milner really suppose that a convenient "and well digested liturgy," composed for public use, ought to be enforced by *pains and penalties*, when he has so repeatedly avowed, that no such was in the Church during all the purest ages? And who shall judge the *genuineness* of the principles on which such liturgy is founded? Is there an *infallibility* in every Church establishment? I am surprised at the poverty, as well as the incon-

clusiveness of these suggestions, in a spiritually minded man. The Jewish theocracy is no precedent till we are in their situation, and have the same authority ; nor are any reasonings from it conclusive. Does the manner in which patriarchal families were governed, imply any *such authority* as is pleaded for ? Supposing an idolater among Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob's slaves, was to be whipped, put to bread and water, or burned, if he did not submit to circumcision ?

I will grant that the magistrates, with the majority of every nation, have a right to form religious institutions for *themselves*. Of this I should hope few will doubt the lawfulness ; and where the Christian religion is generally professed, dispute the utility. Nor does it militate against any divine precept, why *they* may not annex advantages, if the majority so decree, to such institutions : but whether every man in that nation shall be subject to penalties, for not conforming to such regulation, is a very different thing.

Of the *expediency* of supporting the doctrines of religion by a state establishment, the evidence of the best ages of Christianity give us no proof. But *if* it be *expedient* to support them, *what* support is the question ? Who is to judge of the *expediency* ? and *how far* the support is to be afforded, or the *authority* extended ? If conscience must bend to authority, the religion of the Son of God would have been long since extinguished. The first Christians claimed no such support. Admitting that

*“irreligion and idolatry provoke the Almighty,”* God is judge alone—this is no farther matter of cognizance to the magistrate, than as it disturbs the peace of civil society. We have more than twenty million of pagan subjects in Bengal and the East, perfectly obedient, and incapable of resistance ; shall the magistrate inflict pains and penalties upon them for idolatry ; or, like Theodosius, put them to death if they sacrifice ? This, brother Milner, he ought to do on your principles. That our own government doth not afford them better means of instruction, and prevents the humane and Christian labours of those who would inform them, I will confess is highly criminal.

You ask, “May a magistrate compel by pains and penalties to receive a national religion, and restrain others from the exercise of his own judgment ? would not this encourage persecution and be a tyranny over the consciences of men ?” And, why evade answering clearly and distinctly your own questions ? You are compelled to grant, p. 231, what overturns the whole of your argument. You then change the ground, and demand may a man be allowed “to propagate infidelity and idolatry ?” If at liberty to think for himself, he is bound, without disturbing the peace of society, to communicate what he believes to be true, and fairly state what has produced conviction in his own mind. No man ought to insult or deride, what the lawful rulers of the state have agreed to maintain ; but without insulting or deriding, may he not peaceably state the opinions, which he

thinks will correct error, or remove abuses. It will rest with the magistrates and the majority of his fellow-citizens to decide whether *they* will adopt or reject his sentiments.

The Roman Emperor took a shorter way. The pagan who sacrificed, suffered death. The Arian had his possessions confiscated, and was banished the city. "So did Theodosius;" and will Mr. Milner call this no compulsion, but salutary restraint? and deny that this can be called persecution? In the name of truth, what is persecution then? Neither the word of God, nor any of the arguments advanced, have proved one of his propositions; and I hardly suppose he will rest the whole of his proof on the solitary text of Job, which he produces. Whatever *utility* be admitted in providing instruction for the people in the true religion, does it at all follow, that those who refuse to be instructed, or think another mode preferable, should be punished for so doing? These are quite distinct subjects. Besides, who is to judge *how far* the punishment should reach? What shall be the criterion to determine "the tendency to destroy the efficacy of the provision made?" Where the civil order is not disturbed, will it not be more Christian, (and surely to a man of Mr. Milner's spirit, all that can be worth calling Christianity, ought to bear a different aspect from establishments, or human coercion) will it not, I say, be more christian, and more conducive to every good word and work, to permit the truth to appear in its own divine evidence to the conscience, without

any unhallowed auxiliary, or weapons not of our warfare : and to admit perfect liberty of conscience even to Turk, Jew, and Infidel ? And if *uniformity* be “ a chimera of no value,” p. 198, why contend for it ?

I have a real reverence for revealed religion, and believe there is but *one faith* by which any man can be saved. But Mr. Milner's conclusions seem not to flow from his premises ; and the conclusions themselves are false. *True religion* cannot be established by *positive institutions*. It is divine in its origin, and can only be established by its divine Author. “ If the supreme power has no right, p. 232, to violate liberty of conscience ;” then it can have no right to “ establish *true religion* by positive institutions,” unless, 1st. It can produce *infallible* evidences, that *all* its positive institutions are *the true religion*. 2nd. That they are *exclusively* so, and that those who presume to differ, hold not the *true religion*. And here we have a high way to Rome, which all true Protestants have long since united to disclaim.

But if we affect no *infallibility*, then all penal laws to support the fallible decisions of men in matters that *refer only to the conscience*, must be an insolent abuse of power over *Christian liberty*. Will not the whole be more scripturally settled by permitting every man to search the Scriptures for himself ? You say, p. 233, “ in matters of subordinate consequence, which are evidently not “ essential to Christianity, the civil magistrate

“ought not to interfere at all.” Yet you know, that these *subordinate, unessential* matters, have been the chief object of establishments in its *positive institutions*. *Episcopacy* in England, and *Presbytery* in Scotland, has been as jealously guarded by *positive institutions*, as the most *fundamental articles* of faith. With regard to the punishment due, and to be inflicted on the *propagators of opinions held irreligious* by the establishment, you confess, p. 232, the *proposition undefined and involved in difficulties*.

It is astonishing, that with such acknowledgements you do not see the inextricable maze in which you wander, and the dilemma to which you are reduced : and all to avoid this most self-evident and scriptural truth, “Leave every man to God, and his own soul.” Let every Society of Christians prescribe rules for themselves, but such as are the voluntary choice of the body ; and let them indulge their brethren with the same liberty. The best of men have been always the victims of penal laws, enacted under pretence of coercing the worst.

Admit for a moment, that a Bramin among us, stated his reasons for the worship of his God Vishnu, ought he, whilst a peaceable subject, to be punished by the civil magistrate ? Does he not bear the punishment suited to his state, in the ignorance and error in which he lives, and for which he is responsible to God ? Would penal laws convince him ? or give less weight to his arguments with others ? *Sincere Christians*, of whom Mr. Mil-



ner speaks, if I know the nature of Christianity, wish to leave every man the same freedom of opinion, and expression of their sentiments, which they demand for themselves, and never entertain the least apprehensions, that the cause of God and truth can be thereby injured.

With regard also to the points *subordinate* or *essential*, Who has a right to decide? Is it not sufficient that the majority judge for themselves, and leave their brethren the same liberty? What does Mr. Milner mean by *a complete toleration*? Ask any dissenter in the kingdom, whether he thinks his *complete*. If divine truth cannot defend itself against the open attacks or insidious wiles of its enemies, such a magistracy as that of Theodosius, or any which I have ever since known, will form not only an impotent rampart against error, but the very defence thus made, proves the weakness rather than the strength of the fortress. I hope I am a sincere Christian, and yet I differ wholly from my brother Milner, and think divine truth perfectly capable of caring for itself, without the interference of magistrates, or any penal establishments.

P. 234. Who shall judge of "a serious enquirer after truth?" The moment another is permitted to decide upon my *seriousness* or *sincerity*, bigotry and tyranny must immediately erect the inquisitorial tribunal. Read your own Church History and acknowledge it. And as to "prudently not always executing the laws;" p. 234, that is

among the greatest of abuses. Either laws should not be made, or they should be executed.

You own it, "a difficult subject!" Yes, if we bring our prejudices with us, it may seem so. But the matter is plain as truth itself, that conscience, with the bible before us, is to decide for every man. Will Christian fundamentals be better preserved, by pains and penalties, than by voluntary association? Have not all lucrative establishments, with the support of penal laws, the most immediate tendency to make men subscribing hypocrites, and fundamentally false?

Who can decide who are *real Christians*? or what differences in point of doctrine or discipline, shall exclude a man from this distinction? All your arguments fail the farther they are pursued. Will you punish all who dispute the divine right of episcopacy, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the deity of the Son of God, the colour of the coat to be worn in the celebration of divine service, the praying by a liturgy, the doctrine of predestination, the rights of patronage or convocation, the necessity of a divine change of the human heart, or the supremacy of the Pope or the King, in spiritual things?—Oh, brother! a *real Christian* is a man of a different stamp, and loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity himself, is content to leave every other brother to the same word he reads, and to the same spirit which he hath received; and to use or countenance no compulsion, but the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God;

and *that* wielded, not with magisterial power, or rancorous dispute, but in love, and in the spirit of meekness. I am persuaded this will do more to promote *real Christianity*, than all *possible penal establishments*.

P. 235. Did establishments ever prevent profaneness? Look round and judge. Or were dark and barbarous regions enlightened by *them*? Never, but by the zeal of individuals. Indeed establishments have always opposed every labour of this sort, unless done in their own way. Yet even should it be granted that a part of Italy, Spain, or Britain, had continued in irreligion and idolatry, as you presume, without establishments coercive, would they be in deeper darkness, or deeper guilt than they are at this day? I trow not.

As to the commencement or progress of corruption, whether it began before Constantine, or after, is nothing to the purpose. Can it be proved, that it was *less rapid after penal establishments took place*? Mr. Milner knows the reverse is the fact. I do not call *that* Christianity, where power baptises nations at the point of the sword: nor you neither. It is not this Christianity you have developed in the many excellent observations you have made in your Church History. The corruption of Christianity began with its spread under the Apostles themselves: It was impossible from the nature of man, but it must do so. As multitudes entered the Christian pale, professors, not possessors of Christ, the corruption increased: as objects of

pride, ambition, gain, power, dominion, grew up in the Church, it became *more* corrupt. When penal establishments, private patronage, wealth, dignities, increased all these, the corruption *arrived at its summit*. Every Church, in proportion as these abound, will be the same forever. The Church ever did, and ever will flourish most, where the temptations to seek and enjoy these things are least. I appeal to history, living experience, and your own soul. You *assert* that, “establishments strengthen the hands of sincere, humble minded believers ;” yet you know, the largest number of those, whom *you* think *real Christians*, have always to their cost experienced this to be untrue.

Can you believe the liturgy such a bulwark against false doctrine, when you know how few who use it believe their own prayers or confessions? A strange bulwark ! How much more effectual will voluntary association be found in support of evangelical truth, than compulsive or bribed subscriptions.

Have you yet produced a single argument from Scripture, or experience, why religion should “be fettered by political institutions ?” That *atheism should not be tolerated*, you suppose conclusive. And why not tolerated ? Do what you will, oaths will be abused ; look at our courts of justice. If there were no laws against atheism, would there be more glaring and frequent perjury ?

Admitting all that France hath done to be never so wrong, what is that to the argument ? Averse as I am to their horrible deeds, is there less *real Christianity* in France now, than before the revolution ? Are the present institutions more opposite to the power and spirit of Christianity than those of the establishment of Popery were, which they have destroyed ? Are they more averse to the propagation of that *real Christianity* you maintain ? I am fully sure, that a faithful comparison, and future experience, will demonstrate the contrary.

There is *no connection* between government and the establishment of an exclusive religion, but what a criminal policy has formed. The *alliance between Church and State* has ever been meretricious. In what land have the rulers political ever employed their Church power, simply to promote *true religion*, and not political objects ? Examine with candor to the present moment. Have statesmen ever meant the exaltation of a crucified Jesus, and a kingdom not of this world ? You do not believe it yourself.

I can see *no spiritual benefit* resulting from this connection ; yet I am neither Presbyterian nor Independent. After the most diligent enquiry, and I think the most impartial exercise of my best judgment, I am an Episcopalian on conviction, and I hope have fully proved, that the Church had from the beginning men of superior eminence who presided, by whatever name distinguished. I approve highly subscription to articles of religion, that they

who minister together may have *one faith*. I think a sound, well digested liturgy a real blessing, not precluding however free prayer ; and I would admit no man to pray or preach, where I had influence, who did not conform to the confession of a triune God, and a complete redemption through Jehovah incarnate. But our establishment must be a voluntary association ; not an object of avarice to procure pecuniary advantages, but the result of conviction of its utility. I abhor the idea of all pains and penalties inflicted on account of religion upon any human being. God forbid I should consent to shed the blood of a poor heathen, because he offers sacrifice to his idol : or fine or imprison a mistaken Arian, because he gathered not with me. No, I would not touch the hair of the head of a philosopher, or an atheist : it is his misery to be blind, or a blasphemer. I will leave the execution of all these to the patrons of penal establishments : “ With such, mine honour, in these things, be not thou united.”

It may be said, why then do you belong to an establishment with penal laws ? I shall reply without disguise, they are my aversion ; but in the present state of imperfection respecting every thing human, as an episcopalian in sentiment, I find no other Church in this land so conformed to my views of evangelical doctrine, as the Church of England ; and of all dominant Churches none has less abused its power, or showed a more tolerant spirit—but it has abused it. The abuses subsist. I shall freely remonstrate against them, and rejoice to see it with-

out spot or blemish, or any such thing, but never without Bishops ; I wish them only to be men of apostolic stamp and manners.

Mr. Milner supposes, p. 240, “ that without a “ state establishment, there would be no religion “ among us.” Why ? Did not the true Church from the beginning subsist without it ? Was it to obtain this the primitive Christians were content to be confessors and martyrs ? If bigotry can dwell in such minds as Mr. Milner’s, what may we not expect from other men ? Why should *God set his face against every government, which does not fence religion with penal sanctions ?* Does not America subsist without them, a monument of religious peace, I wish I could say of piety ? Yet in the scale of piety, I fear, they will fairly weigh against us. Must the institution be atheistical, that leaves men complete toleration, and perfect liberty of conscience to every individual ? Is it possible that the feeblest reasoner, should ever imagine or connect such a conclusion ?

BUT WILL GOD SET HIS FACE AGAINST IT ? as you affirm, in Roman capitals. Where does this appear ? Has not the government of China subsisted longer than any state of Christendom ; not to mention others ? Is not atheism, or something very like it, the religion of the literati, and idolatry of the vulgar ? Has God *confounded* that nation by any particular judgments ? Does it not subsist at this day, teeming with an immense population, in undisturbed peace and prosperity ? God’s gov-

ernment, and his judgments are a great deep. It is in the eternal world he will be seen, righteous in all his ways, and just in all his works. I am greatly mistaken, if all that is worth the name of Christianity did not subsist from the beginning, and in vigour to this day, without the least relation to any establishment. And I am sure as far as pains and penalties have disgraced any Christian establishment, so far they have defeated all its professed purposes to propagate real religion.

P. 241. *Crambe repetita*. Again, who shall define what is *fundamental*, and what is *circumstantial*? Hath it ever yet been done satisfactorily? Can it be done? But you say, "*If men would seriously weigh.*" If! But what if they will not? Would the laws of the land be less effectual for the good order of society, if all ecclesiastical pains and penalties were abolished? When the people chose their own ministers, before Christianity gained an establishment for 300 years, even under pagan tyrants, did not vital Christianity flourish more than it has done since, without either pain or penalty, except the simple exclusion from the voluntary association? Since Bishops have too generally been the creatures of ministers, and presbyters of patrons, have the kingdoms of the world become more the kingdoms of God and of his Christ? By whose authority hath the primitive model, you yourself have subscribed, been disregarded?

As to an establishment bearing hard on dissolute men, and correcting their manners by pains



and penalties ; where did ever an ecclesiastical establishment subsist, but the morals were dissolute ? Did this ever correct them ? Who are the most dissolute ? The makers and heads of establishments, or the governed ? Example will do more than executions. Do you suppose any Christian government, now subsisting in the world, hath not more infidels and sceptics, and in high places too, than genuine *believers*, as you and I count *believing* ? —As you say, “ the practical inferences are obvious,” but obvious in a sense, the very reverse of what you would suppose.

I follow your division of persons.

1st. *The friends of establishment.* Such Christianity ! Are there no causes, but the love of Christ, that make men friends to establishments ? Friend thou knowest better.

2nd. *Dissenters, owning fundamentals.* From what then can these possibly dissent, that should expose them to pains and penalties—From a truly Christian establishment ?

3d. *Infidel dissenters.* Arian, Socinian, shall I add Arminian, or shall that not be fundamental ? Do infidels care about any establishment ? Will they not subscribe our creeds and articles without believing a word of them ? Do the majority of churchmen give themselves a thought about the matter ? Do the great concern themselves about any thing but to keep church powers and dignities as they find them, as most conducive to their own

political purposes? And do those who inflict the pains and penalties, believe one tittle more of the doctrines, or more scrupulously adhere to the discipline, than those whom they affect to punish *pro salute animæ*? Indeed, shame of late has palsied the hand of long abused power, or fear muzzled the tiger : but no thanks to establishments. The statutes of Omri remain unrepealed.

P. 243. You remind me of the mask in the fable. Is the present ecclesiastical establishment so beautifully complete, and all its principal limbs models of such Christian perfection? But irony hardly suits a subject so awful. God forbid that magistrates should enforce the existing laws! I hope never more to see high church bigots daring again to oppress true Christianity by the rigid execution of penal statutes. Do you wish to revive the days of Laud? I know you do not. Vice, heresy, schism, and profaneness must be subdued by other weapons if we would make Christian conquests. *non tali auxilio*. Prove the injury you sustain, appeal to Cæsar, receive damages. Let a jury of twelve good men and true, appreciate them. Will a spiritual court afford you a more equitable redress, or be more likely to maintain the peace and good order of society?

To be sure "men should believe the doctrines they are bound to inculcate." But will this be most effectually secured by voluntary associations, or penal establishments?—*How* an establishment shall be most *wisely constructed*, is the desideratum.

Convoke all the *real Christians* in the land. What would be their suffrage? Who would be chosen their church governors? What would be *their establishment*? I think something like what you have proposed in your first volume of Church History.

- But, brother, you and I should be left dissenters in a sad minority, if not thinking with the multitude of great and little Christians around us, who have all the power, constitutes a dissention. And the church establishment, you and I should form, would have no pains and penalties but the primitive ones, admonition—repeated—and if disregarded—exclusion from the society of the faithful. Whatever goes farther than this, has no divine warrant for us to follow.

P. 244. Your ideas are Utopian, and at the same time contradictory to all you advance. Suppose, what is a very supposable case, such an antichristian government as you mention, established by the majority of any country. Who shall judge *the wickedness of the heart* of those who do it, but God only? Are the minority justified in *resisting* such authority? Have they a claim beyond toleration and peace? Else where are your passive principles so often inculcated to the powers that be? Is an heterodox Christian governor to be resisted, and Nero to be obeyed?—Leave governors of states, who support false religion, where they ought to be left, to the judgments of God. But if these fall heavy on *their* heads, what will be the case with civil and ecclesiastical governors who support an establishment, the fundamental articles of which

the greater part no more believe, than the persons it censures ? Nay, astonishing to tell ! the most conscientious preachers of the doctrines of that establishment fall the first under their rebukes, for believing and acting as that very establishment prescribes. For whatever be the pretext employed, the real offence is believing and preaching the doctrines with zeal *in season, out of season*. You and I know such an establishment.

P. 245. To be sure. You and I do so now—we should do the same under Nero or Constantius. “Resolutely spread the Gospel, and be content to suffer.” Under the present establishment the doctrines of which we approve, and to the liturgy of which, with some small alterations and shortenings, not at all affecting its substance, we accede, yet from the abuses inseparable from all establishments of Church and State united, we feel, that whilst unchristian men rule, and rule they must, whilst political maxims dispose of all preferments in the Church, even supposing our own the best of all possible penal and coercive establishments, yet that best is worse than none. Conscience and consent, not penalties, should form real Christian union.

I trust I have now proved to the satisfaction of every true Christian, that the propositions you set out with, are utterly unfounded, and the very reverse of them, truth. “That Theodosius had *no* right to make his religion that of the state universally, with pains and penalties on the dissen-

“ters from his impositions.—That every man in  
“this matter is to be left to his own conscience,  
“undisturbed, as long as he is a peaceable subject  
“—That it is an unwarranted violation of the  
“right of private judgment to impose religious  
“sentiments on the subjects of any government,  
“with pains and penalties for non-conformity—  
“and therefore Theodosious, and all others who  
“have acted like him, are chargeable with a crimi-  
“nal abuse of authority.” All which positions  
I trust I have left no longer “INVOLVED IN DIFFICULTIES.”

## DISSERTATION II.



## ON SCHISM.

**A**S most formal and dead professors are strongly attached to the shibboleth of party, and studious to place under some opprobrious name, the faithful and spiritual minded, who witness against their ignorance and bigotry, I wish to consider what is the true scriptural idea of schism, and who are the schismatical, and the schism makers.

Schism, or division, as applied to Christians, is the separation of one body of professing Christians from another, on whatever cause it may have arisen ; and usually is understood in a criminal sense, as originating in a proud, factious spirit, and destitute of justifiable grounds of separation.

It will therefore be necessary to define the essence of a true Church, in order to discern, when, and in what cases, separation from those with whom we have been formerly joined, is not only justifiable, but absolutely necessary, according to the Scripture.

The passions and the prejudices of men are ready to darken their understanding, and to prevent a

candid enquiry. Every man is disposed to erect himself into an infallible judge, and the Church to which he attaches himself, as exclusively the only true Church ; and thus to look upon those, who join not in his opinions as deluded and mistaken ; and sometimes, nay, too frequently, this proceeds to all the asperity of anathemas ; and not only those who differ from us are rejected from the title of brethren, but their ordinations invalidated, their baptisms disallowed, and their Christianity, if not absolutely denied, regarded as very equivocal. Till we can come to a happier unity of spirit, and thence to a nearer uniformity of sentiment, candor and mutual forbearance will become us all. It is not in the collision of angry disputants, that the truth as it is in Jesus, is to be sought, but in a humble sense of our limited capacities, and in earnest supplication to the Father of lights, to lead us into all truth.

Respecting a true Church, I do not know a more liberal and genuine definition, than is given by the Church of England.

The Church is “ a Society of faithful people, “ where the word of God is truly preached, and “ the sacraments duly ministered.” I shall leave bigots to dispute about modes and forms, and adhere to the substantial parts of a true Church, according to this definition, and then consider what separation from particular Churches, constitutes schism as criminal.

As the Church is the body of Christ, the members must be joined to him in one spirit. This is the first and essential characteristic. He has only a name to live and is dead; who is destitute of the mind of Christ. To be a *faithful* people, called to be *saints*, is the only criterion of a true Church. Where this requisite is not found, no Society can claim to be a Christian Church, but must be the synagogue of Satan, and whatever name it bears, it is anti-christian.

True Christianity is necessarily social. They who love one another out of a pure heart fervently, naturally unite ; and as worship of their Lord, and communion with each other, is felt as their delight as much as duty, therefore prayer and praise, edifying discourse, and fraternal communications, form a bond of association, which is every day preparing them for the company and inheritance of the saints in light.

The society of faithful people is peculiarly careful to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints ; and, therefore, their first concern is, to procure the *word of God* to be TRULY preached among them. As they are a Society, some fundamental articles of faith must necessarily be the bond of their union in which they agree, and the purity of which they jealously maintain among themselves : and whatever such Church, or such Society have agreed upon, they have a right to enforce as the terms of communion ; and if the minister ceases to preach such doctrine, or to pre-



sent a suitable example correspondent therewith, then that Society, and every faithful individual of it, is, by the Scripture, bound to withdraw himself from such erroneous pastor or teacher, when his dismissal cannot otherwise be obtained. This voluntary agreement in fundamental articles, infringes no right of private judgment. Every man as an individual, may change his mind and withdraw ; but during such union, if any teacher bring another doctrine, we are not to bid him God speed ; but contrarily from such withdraw thyself. And what God hath commanded can be no schism, in any criminal sense.

The *due* administration of the sacraments, baptism and the supper of the Lord, is essential, as the connecting bond of outward union ; and whatever be the mode of the administration, about which so many disputes have arisen, this surely can be but a subordinate consideration, whilst the divine institutions are observed.

These considerations being premised, it will be more easily discerned, who makes the schism, and who are the schismatical, whenever divisions ensue.

In every Church, whether constituted of aggregate congregations, or confined to one individual Society, each of the aggregate congregations is in the same situation as the individual Society. And if originally every Bishop had but one parish (as King urges) within his superintendence, or as I have endeavoured to prove, besides his own peculiar cure, a superintending care of the presbyters,

and the Churches established in his town or vicinage, in either case the claim of the people on their own pastor, presbyter, or bishop, was the same. The essential constitution of every Church, single or aggregate, is, that "the word of God should be truly preached among a society of faithful people ;" and wherever this ceased to be the case, there separation became duty.

1st. If the pastor, presbyter, or bishop, is not a true preacher of God's word, according to the doctrines established in the society of faithful people where he ministers, the disciples must be separated from him.

Reduce the essential doctrines to as few as possible ; I apprehend in every Christian Church, which can truly deserve that name, that two at least will be esteemed fundamental. 1st. The complete atonement made by the offering of the great sacrifice, God and man in one Christ. And, 2dly. The necessity of a divine change, by the real influence, and communication of the Holy Ghost, as a divine person, producing a new heart and a right spirit, in those who in and of themselves can do no good thing.

I confine myself to these, the clearest, and most important points of Christian doctrine, admitted as of essential consequence by every orthodox society of Christians which has yet been formed.

Therefore, if such pastor, presbyter, or Bishop, as presides in the Church to which I belong, deny

these fundamental doctrines, or in his preaching enters not into them, but manifests he neither believes them himself, nor wishes to edify his Society of faithful people in them—whatever authority hath appointed such person over them, the faithful people are bound to withdraw themselves from him, and to procure such a one as shall preach to them the true word of God, according to the fundamental Christian doctrines : and there is no schism in such a division from an unsound teacher : but he who occasions the separation is the criminal person.

2nd. It was admitted in all the primitive Churches, that immoral conduct, and negligence of the flock, were just causes for rejecting such unfaithful Bishop, pastor, or presbyter ; and that the Scripture no where suggests the idea of indelible character, or that any man, by whatever authority constituted, can be a minister of Christ, when he hath denied the faith in his teaching, and dishonoured it by his practice.

I shall not enter into minute discussions respecting the proof necessary. Facts of this kind usually carry with them no dubious evidence ; and if the evidence be dubious, charity hopeth all things ; but if no doubt remains in my mind of what I have an opportunity of observing every day ; if instead of a laborious preacher of God's holy word, and an ornamental walk in the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, the reverse is the fact, whether attended with grosser immoralities or not, I am in duty bound to withdraw myself from such, both

for my own soul's good, and to bear a faithful testimony for the sake of my brethren. And where no factious, proud, or contentious spirit is the ground of separation, but a full conviction of facts, determining my conscience in the decision, there no schism can be justly chargeable; contrarywise, such a faithful confession, the great Head of the Church will honour, in obedience to whom, we come out, and touch not the unclean thing.

I enter not here into the consideration, which among the churches of Christendom is the best constituted in its model, and most apostolical in its administration. If I belong to the best aggregate society originally, into which corruption of principle and practice has entered, so as to infect the teacher where I am situated, my duty is to quit such teacher, and such society as maintains communion with him, and to seek the fundamentals of a true Church wherever I can find them, and to join with that, in which according to the best of my knowledge, the word of God is preached in its greatest purity, and adorned in the practice of the bishop, presbyter or pastor, with his congregation in greatest spirituality.

Many differences of opinions and modes of worship, may admit inter-communion—and all hasty and needless divisions are to be guarded against as productive of the worst consequences. But where fundamentals are lost, and only names and forms remain, there we can have no fellowship, and the word of God commands open separation and avowal of the cause.

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